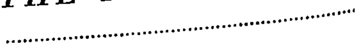
# THE POOR MAN'S GUIDE TO EUROPE

*Books by David Dodge*

THE POOR MAN'S GUIDE TO EUROPE
TIME OUT FOR TURKEY
20,000 LEAGUES BEHIND THE 8-BALL
THE CRAZY GLASSPECKER
HOW LOST WAS MY WEEK-END
HOW GREEN WAS MY FATHER

*Mystery Adventure*

TO CATCH A THIEF
THE RED TASSEL
PLUNDER OF THE SUN
THE LONG ESCAPE
IT AIN'T HAY
ANGEL'S RANSOM


THE POOR MAN'S

Revised Edition, 1956



# GUIDE TO EUROPE

by **DAVID DODGE**

*with illustrations by* IRV KOONS

RANDOM HOUSE • NEW YORK

*Revised Edition, 1956*


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# PREFACE TO THE 1956 REVISED EDITION

Major developments in the field of European travel last year, mainly encouraging ones from the viewpoint of the low-budget traveler, were a remarkable boom in the construction of motels on the roads of the continent and in the British Isles; continued expansion of the network of excellent long-haul, low-cost European bus lines; preliminary steps in the reorganization of Europe's railroads which, when completed this summer, will streamline the system to two classes instead of three and offer increased efficiency and lower fares in both classes; the extension of "family-plan" off-season rate reductions to transatlantic and transarctic air flights from North America; and increased offerings by European governments of attractive discounts to visitors who can arrange to do their visiting during the slack winter months.

Most of travel industry's efforts in these directions are either designed to or will in fact divert some of the ever increasing flood of tourism in Europe away from overcrowded urban and resort centers during the high season. Today, western Europe is supersaturated with visitors every summer. It does not have accommodations for everybody in the places where everybody wants to be at the same time, and even the late return of Austria to the list of free and sovereign nations in which travel is unrestricted by occupying armed forces did not provide enough room for the overflow. Either the pressure grew so great or the clink of big money pouring into the travel turnstiles swelled so loud that the Iron Curtain, after a few pre-

liminary creaks of warning, began to give. Russia, Poland, Rumania, Hungary and Czechoslovakia all announced an interest in welcoming tourists from the West, Americans included. The State Department reciprocated by lifting former restrictions on American passport holders against travel in those countries, leaving only Albania and Bulgaria proscribed to United States nationals in eastern Europe. Russia followed this gesture by handing out tourist visas instead of talking about them, and at the end of the year several American travel agencies were quoting prices for all-inclusive package tours from New York to Moscow and return. The long-barred gates were open.

It is too early to judge how wide the gates will swing, but signs are promising that Europe may again soon extend to the Ural Mountains, the Caspian, the Caucasus and the Black Sea for the average traveler. The author promises to explore all aspects of penny-pinching and budget ballooning in the new areas as they open up to Americans, and thereafter extend the scope of *The Poor Man's Guide to Europe* as appropriate. Meanwhile, this revision, brought up to date in the light of all latest developments in the field it covers, is dedicated to travelers who would like a maximum value for their money, and an enjoyable holiday, in the Europe of 1956.

*D. D.*

*January, 1956*

## CONTENTS

# 1

## PAPA N'EST PAS SI BÊTE

*In which the author presents his qualifications as a traveler and as a conscientious nickel-nurser. Why some Americans in Europe pay through the nose for everything, unnecessarily. Why others chisel along comfortably with very little cash expenditure, and how they go about it.*

Several years ago I wrote a book about certain limited aspects of travel in Mexico. It was published under what I still regard as a misleading title, *How Green Was My Father,* and it convinced a number of people, including my wife and daughter, that as far as foreign voyages were concerned, I was a hopeless bonehead who couldn't be trusted to find his way across the bay on a ferryboat.

For reasons which had nothing to do with the statute of limitations, I spent the next six consecutive years outside the United States, continually on the go across borders, through customs and immigration rigamaroles, in and out of passport-control offices, consulates and barbed-wire entanglements of red tape, coping with strange languages, strange foods, strange monetary units and stranger regulations applicable to foreigners. Most of the time I lugged my wife and daughter along with me, a complication which adds to the difficulties, as well as to the pleasure, of any grand tour. According to the whims of publishers and the reading public, we were sometimes flush enough to travel in style, sometimes so nearly flat broke that if I hadn't learned to squeeze pennies properly we would have been gnawing the bark off trees. By foot, donkey cart, canoe, ferry, bus, streetcar, motorbike, truck, river boat, plane, train, *téléférique*, ocean liner, freighter and automobile, we clocked fifty thousand miles more or less as a family unit, and once I traveled alone, except for the inspiring effect of a bottle of cognac, from the French Riviera to the Italian Riviera on a Mediterranean *pédalo*, or water bicycle, without any identity papers at all and no clothes except a pair of swimming trunks, almost causing an international incident as a result because the French cops were looking for an escaped murderer thought to be heading for Italy at the time. In the course of one two-year period, just to see if it could be done, I traveled by car through all that part of Europe which is on this side of the Communist East-European-Co-Prosperity-Sphere, as well as into Berlin and through the wilds of Yugoslavia, which has its own brand of co-prosperity but is most eager to welcome capitalist tourists.

All I have to show for the whole experience, in a tangible way, is a good collection of baggage labels and a working knowledge of a couple of new languages, together with odd

phrases in others like Portuguese, Norwegian and Greek, practically useless. On the intangible side, however, I learned a lot of angles and gathered many bits of useful information about how to move from point to point in Europe comfortably and at minimum cost and inconvenience. This education, superimposed on a natural disinclination to let go of a dollar unnecessarily, made me an expert getter-around at cut rates. It seemed to me that what I had learned might well be incorporated in a practical handbook for other voyagers—not a guidebook in the accepted sense but a kind of tipsheet for travelers, with proper emphasis on dollar-stretching for the average bankroll so that the book would be a sound investment and return a profit to all parties.

But for a long time I was unable to conquer the handicap of *How Green Was My Father.* In spite of the skill and economy with which I piloted my family from country to country, the demonstrable know-how with which I met problems that arose as we went along, the clear superiority I showed in haggling over prices with porters, hotel clerks and moneychangers wherever we went, my wife and daughter were convinced that we were simply stumbling along in the dark, trusting to dumb luck. The old man was still green, in their eyes. I knew that if I could not convince them, who had seen my metamorphosis at first-hand over a period of years, I couldn't convince anybody; that the traveler's handbook I had in mind would be a hopeless floperoo unless I could overcome the impression that I was just another innocent abroad, coasting along with lucky breaks and the help of the American Express Company.

When I was about ready to abandon the whole idea, a French magazine published an article which I had written and which the editors of the magazine chose to entitle *"Papa n'est pas si bête."* This phrase, roughly translated, means "Papa is

not so dumb." The subject matter of the article isn't important, except that it involved an incident in which, in the writing, I made myself appear smarter than my wife and daughter. I could equally have made myself seem as big a dope as I had been, or appeared to be, in *How Green Was My Father*—it was that kind of incident—but I was tired of the old stall. Just for a change I played myself up as the intelligent member of the family.

The curious thing was the ready way in which my family fell for it. My daughter Kendal, who was eleven and pretty contemptuous of my French (an envious curse, in passing, on all kids who have a chance to learn foreign languages by ear at an early age), said, with considerable surprise, "Hey, you even used the *subjonctif* right!"

I saw no point in explaining that the article had been translated by somebody else from the English original. Elva, my wife, had real respect in her voice when, after reading the article, she said, "You're not so dumb at times, at that."

I saw, in a flash, the real power of the printed word. It isn't what happens to you that counts, or how dumb or how smart you really are, but how you report it, whether you make yourself the hero or the butt of the story. Most people will take the report on faith. I realized that I could go ahead with the traveler's handbook, using a careful mixture of fact and properly slanted interpretation to make myself appear as thoroughly a master in the field of European travel as I knew I really was in spite of a few fumbles I may have made from time to time.

This does not mean that I propose to distort the facts, because no handbook is worth a dime if its facts are unreliable. I may, however, present them in one way or another, as appears appropriate to demonstrate a point or point a moral.

For example, it is a fact that one summer when we were

living at a small *pension* on the Côte d'Azur, I went for a drive along La Croisette with a friend named George, newly arrived in France. We were in an open convertible he had rented, and he was driving. La Croisette is the boulevard which runs along the beach at Cannes between a row of swank hotels and the sand. It is not very wide, and it carries a lot of traffic, pedestrians as well as automobiles, during the summer season. The pedestrians are often French girls on their way to or from the beach, and French girls are not only justly proud of their lovely figures but uninhibited about exposing them to the healthful rays of the sun. That particular summer a favorite bathing costume for young women at Cannes consisted of a small *cache-sexe,* or basic triangle, plus two round patches at a higher level which were attached to the wearer by suction or glue or will power, I'm not sure which. At least they had no visible external support. From the rear and at a distance, the girls apparently wore nothing at all except their shoes.

George, fresh from Boston, said, "Wow!" in a strangled voice as we turned into the boulevard and caught sight of a redhead going away from us. The car tried to leap a curb and climb through the plate-glass window of Wagon-Lits Cook.

I said, "Watch where you're going!"

"How can I? Holy mackerel! Look at *that* one!"

His hat jumped three feet straight up in the air, the way startled hats jump in the funny papers, although I suppose it was only a trick of the breeze. I said, "She's got nothing you can't gawp at on the beach any time you're interested. Keep your eyes on the *road!*"

"I'm— My *God!* Where are the police? This is incred— *Look* at that! And *that!* They're all stark, staring naked! Do you mean to sit there and tell me—"

I never learned what it was I was supposed to be sitting there telling him. He had craned his neck so far around to

take a second look that he turned the car with him, heading it for more plate glass. This time it was the window of Cartier's, full of diamonds. There was nothing for me to do but try to haul the wheel in the other direction. When the *agents de police* unwrapped us from a palm tree, I explained that my friend had suffered a dizziness which made his eyes go out of focus and that I would drive him safely home if the car still ran. I got it, and George, away from La Croisette without further trouble, although he was breathing hard most of the time and would have jumped out of the car, baying like a hound, when we passed a particularly fascinating blonde girl clothed mainly in dark glasses, if I had not hauled him back by the coattail and told him to act his age.

On these facts, George still thinks I'm a cold fish with ice water in my veins and steely self-control. The *other* facts—that only a week had passed since I craned my neck at the wrong moment and rammed my own car smack into an expensive Cadillac where he had been lucky enough to hit a tree, and was as a result driving his car with a suspended license which would have landed us both in jail if I had so much as let my eyes waver toward the blonde—he knows nothing about. As I have said, it's all in the way you slant the report.

This handbook, full as it is of suggestions about how to be careful on La Croisette and how to get your money's worth everywhere, should not be regarded as a guidebook. An orthodox guidebook, if it is properly revised not less often than once a year by a corps of experts working painstakingly to bring it up to date, contains much current information which is very useful to any traveler, not to say essential. My own handbook is revised annually by a painstaking corps of one, contains a recitation of general principles involving economical European travel, and is not intended to substitute for guidebooks but to explain, among other things, why *some* are better than

others for the price. There are tricks to any trade, travel as well as piano moving, by which an end can be reached economically and without strained muscles instead of at the cost of too much money and a dislocated sacroiliac. This is a collection of those tricks. I am not just talking about the advisability of keeping your eyes front and center on the Côte d'Azur, which is a trick in itself. I mean ways and means to make a trip, visit or stay in Europe more enjoyable and less expensive for any American. Particularly less expensive, which is practically synonymous with more enjoyable for most people.

A couple of definitions and one recommendation are necessary before the cost-cutting begins. "American," in the United States, means a United Statesian. It doesn't in other parts of the world. A Panamanian is American, an Argentino is American, a Mexican is American, a French-Canadian is American. They all come from the Americas. In this book an American is a United States citizen, somebody with a green passport and dollars to spend. An income measured in terms of dollars, however few, is the main secret of successful travel. In Europe, as in other parts of the world, American dollars are worth their weight in something more than market quotations. Canadian dollars are often even better, if anybody has any.

"Europe" is a continent, extended to include the British Isles and Iceland according to some authorities. I have eliminated Iceland from Europe, for my own purposes, because I have not yet been there, know nothing about the country, and do not think it will interest many visitors. For other reasons, mainly political, I have also scratched everything behind the Iron Curtain except for Berlin, which ordinary tourists can still visit. Europe, as I intend to use the word, means Berlin and West Germany; all of Austria now that the Russians have hauled out and returned it to the former management; Norway,

Sweden, Finland, Denmark, Holland, Belgium, Luxembourg, Switzerland, France, England, Ireland, Spain, Portugal, Italy, Greece, Turkey-in-Europe, Yugoslavia, and the small odds and ends contained in the same area: Andorra, Liechtenstein, San Marino, Monaco, Trieste, the Saar, Vatican City, Gibraltar. I shall also toss in a few island possessions from time to time to make the package more attractive.

"European," in this handbook, refers to any one of the quarter of a billion people living in Europe as defined above. There is an incongruity in grouping under one title such different nationalities as the Greeks and the Swedes, or historical enemies like Germans and Frenchmen. But they are all neighbors in a relatively small corner of the world, and the pressure is on them to settle their differences and get together against housebreakers trying to crush in from outside. It doesn't hurt to think of free Europe as a unity even if it still has some way to go. Besides, "European" is a convenient tag, like "American." The two terms distinguish between a host and a visitor.

This distinction is an important one, and has a vital bearing on the over-all cost of living in Europe as far as visitors are concerned. When you visit any host, even as a paying guest, you do not ordinarily insist that he install a new hot-water system and change the wallpaper in the dining room because it hurts your eyes. You may reasonably ask for good food and a comfortable bed, but if you go so far as to set the rules for the furnishings of the establishment, then you must be prepared to pay extra.

So it is in Europe. You can, for a price, buy there an imitation of the American way of life—American hotels, American breakfasts, American cocktails, American hamburgers. But these, like all imports, cost far too much, and you would do better for yourself, if this is what you want, by going to Yellowstone National Park. European equivalents are much



cheaper and frequently better. A visitor to Europe who makes an effort to live and travel as the Europeans do, patronizing those hotels, restaurants, shops and boozing joints which Europeans themselves patronize, will find them different from what he is accustomed to, but novel, interesting and economical. Another visitor, demanding that Europe provide him with what he is used to at home, will pay through the nose for everything he gets. And it won't be what he really wants, because an imitation is always an imitation, never the original. An economy-minded traveler should be prepared to leave the American way of life in the United States, where it properly belongs, and adapt himself to European ways of life.

It is more than coincidence that American travelers who come back from Europe bleating about the terrible clipping they took from the natives are people who were not *simpático* toward Europeans to begin with, and took no particular trouble to hide their conviction that the world revolves around Washington, D. C. It may be true, but it *is* castor oil for many Europeans to swallow. Americans who are too vocal about the superiority of the United States, United Statesers and the United States way of life over European equivalents are asking for a shearing wherever they go. They frequently get it.

Others, less vocal, find that Europeans, generally, like and trust and will give a fair shake to Americans, generally, when the Americans try to meet them halfway. The stories about European harpies who fatten on money brought over by American tourists and then sneer at the poor uncultured suckers behind their backs are greatly exaggerated, and if you do get fleeced now and then by a Brussels taxi driver, you can get fleeced twice as thoroughly in Chicago. The Brussels taxi driver's manners are a lot better than the Chicago taxi driver's, too, because even while a Belgian is fleecing you he is polite about it. You have to learn to be equally gracious in inviting

his attention to the error, instead of bawling for a cop. In one case you may possibly get your money back, and in the other you only disturb everybody's peace of mind—yours, the taxi driver's, the cop's and that of the crowd which will gather and think you are acting very *gauche* about a few centimes. The fact that you are in the right and the taxi driver in the wrong has nothing to do with it at all. European conventions, European methods of beefing about an overcharge, European habit patterns rule in Europe, and unless you are prepared to adapt yourself to them, you will be the one to suffer, not the Europeans.

A simple thing like a handshake will illustrate. American women who ordinarily shake hands with a stiff wrist, as my wife did while her wrist lasted, had better be prepared to abandon the habit in a hurry, because it is customary for European gentlemen to kiss ladies' hands when they are introduced, and unless the lady co-operates she is either going to engage in hard-fought Indian-wrestling contests with guys trying to get her hand up high enough to touch it with their lips, or wind up with her arm in a sling. European manners *demand that the gentleman win the contest. It's your arm, but* it's his country.

In brief, no amount of spendable cash will buy you a good time in Europe if you have to have it served the American way. If you are willing to take the dish the way they prepare it, then Europe is your oyster. All you need is time to enjoy it and a reasonable amount of money. Not nearly as much money as most people have been led to believe, either, if you know how to stretch available funds properly. At fund-stretching, European style, I lay claim to the title of the world's greatest living authority, and I will support the claim with facts and figures in the succeeding chapters of this handbook.

# 2

## WANNA CHANGE DOLLARS, JACK?

*The European money-exchange racket, and several ways it can be gimmicked by travelers with dollars, although regrettably not as of yore. Free money markets and official money markets distinguished. How to take it with you at a profit. The wisdom of consulting with money-changers before embarking on any trip. Parlays of hard money to soft money, and legitimate profits arising therefrom. Black markets, and illegitimate profits arising therefrom. Getaway money. Go Now, Pay Later as a source of travel funds. How to ride the European gravy train at a dollar down and a dollar a week.*

The profits available to an experienced sharpshooter in the field of foreign-money trading are not what they once were,

regrettably. A few years ago almost any European currency except the Swiss franc and the Portuguese escudo could be purchased, with dollars, at some kind of a discount and disbursed at par, this being the essential gimmick in all profitable free-money dealings by honest travelers as opposed to mercenary speculators. Today, most European media of exchange are so stable in value, so close to being "hard" money, that the honest traveler may wear his shoes out looking for a profitable deal in local currency, often not finding one. But occasional exchange advantages do still present themselves in Europe to the visitor with dollars in his pocket, and it is important that the thrifty tripper be able to identify such advantages when they exist if he is going to obtain maximum benefits from his bankroll. A dollar may not be what it used to be in Europe, but a pfennig saved is still a pfennig earned.

In all of Europe outside the Iron Curtain, which is to say in all of Europe here under discussion, there is only one absolutely free currency. This is the Swiss franc. It is as hard, or stable in value, as any money ever gets, and Switzerland imposes no restrictions of any kind on the import and export of, or trade in, its own money or any money. In Geneva, as in any other large Swiss city, you can go to a bank and sell or buy francs, dollars, pesetas, dinars, lire and other *valuta* on a free market controlled only by world economic factors. The Swiss franc itself, being uncontrolled, is always worth exactly one Swiss franc in terms of purchasing power, and there is no way known to man by which anybody can increase its value beyond that point. For this reason Switzerland (along with Liechtenstein, a small neighboring principality theoretically independent but practically in Switzerland's vest pocket when it comes to money matters) is in a category by itself, and can be temporarily shelved with the important note that it is a good

place in which to convert dollars to other currencies if you happen to be in the neighborhood and the price is right.

The money of all other European countries is controlled, in one way or another, to the extent control is feasible, which is only within the geographical limits of the country where the money is legal tender. Controls vary in strictness from country to country; they are almost entirely theoretical in Portugal, where currency-trading is nearly as free as it is in Switzerland, and very strict in Yugoslavia, at the other extreme, where Tito's goon squads will beat the ears off any citizen who even smells like an exchange broker. As European moneys gain in stability with European economies, controls become less necessary to prevent their flight into gold, diamonds or dollars, and a gradual slackening of monetary restrictions goes on which may ultimately end up in universal free convertibility of all European currencies, a development that would deprive visiting American firemen of any remaining trading advantages they now glean from their possession of dollars.

So far, however, all countries in Europe except Switzerland contend that their own money has a certain standard value in terms of other hard money—dollars, Swiss francs—and each country establishes official, or pegged, rates as the basis for foreign-exchange dealings within its borders. The true trading value of the country's cash, as reflected on world free-currency markets, is often lower than the official value—not much lower today in most cases, it is true, and with an increasing tendency for the spread between free-market and official exchange rates to narrow or even disappear. Nevertheless, free-market money is still somewhat cheaper to buy than official money in a number of cases, and tends to become even cheaper from time to time at rumors of devaluation, cabinet crises or divorce in the political family. It follows that a traveler with an eye on the

market may on occasion reap a financial benefit by buying his spending money, for any country he plans to visit, at a discount beyond the reach of that country's controls, and importing it, to the extent he is permitted to do so.

Sticking strictly to legalities for the moment, all of Europe outside of Switzerland-Liechtenstein can be divided into two categories as far as currency imports are concerned. These are "open" and "closed." The open countries, currently, are Portugal, Belgium, Luxembourg, France (Monaco, the Saar and Andorra may be regarded as part of France, for practical purposes), Italy (including San Marino, Vatican City and Trieste), Ireland, West Germany and Austria. There have been no changes in the list during the past year, although the trend is for "closed" countries to open up in time. Remaining closed countries are England, Holland, Spain, Greece, Turkey, Yugoslavia and the four Scandinavian nations. In any open country a tourist is permitted not only to import and re-export all the dollars, letters of credit, traveler's checks and assorted foreign spending-lettuce he happens to be carrying, but may bring with him as well an unlimited amount of that country's own currency, acquired where and at the best price he can find it, to finance his visit.

In many open countries, never in closed countries, a visitor may also legitimately trade for local currency at private exchange houses which pay less than world free-market rates but often something more than official bank rates, so that although banks may be obliged by law to deal at the pegged rates, a dealer operating next door under a sign which says "Change-Exchange-Cambio-Wechsel" for the benefit of foreign nationals will quote anybody a price for dollars that might be a couple of points better than official rates, depending on the day's market and how hard the customer bargains. Again, the

worth, as in Spain. After these amounts are exhausted the visitor must either make another trip out of the country to reload at free-market prices, or buy locally at less advantageous controlled prices. I have not yet got around to domestic black markets. So far, everything is strictly according to Hoyle.

The rules change from country to country and from year to year, leaving behind some silly survivals which can often be legitimately turned into cash by the traveler on the lookout for a fast *duro.* Some countries, for example Spain and Greece at this point in history, permit Americans traveling inside their borders to acquire domestic currency only with hard money; dollars and Swiss francs, or these and Portuguese escudos, sometimes also pounds sterling. Other countries, naming no names because they may wake up to realities at any minute and change the rules, permit visitors to trade for their money with any other kind of money, at par value, so that while it may be impossible for the visitor to acquire a supply of Country A's money at a discount in Switzerland, or legitimately bring it into Country A to spend even if he could find it at a discount, or buy it with dollars at better than official rates inside Country A, he can convert his dollars into Country B's soft money at free-market rates before going to Country A, then work it off on a bank at more favorable official exchange rates, a very nice arrangement for him and one entirely within the ropes. France has a peculiar control under which visitors may buy any kind of currency, including dollar bills, in "reasonable amounts" from its banks, but only with traveler's checks and similar negotiable instruments, not with other currencies, except that if you are stuck with dollar bills instead of traveler's checks and want to acquire free Spanish pesetas, for example, you can first buy traveler's checks with the dollars and *then* spend them for pesetas, which reduces the control to utter

nonsense except that somebody gets a small cut out of each exchange transaction at the traveler's expense, and it is not the purpose of this handbook to point the way to losses for the traveler, only gains.

The most important, up-to-the-minute, rewarding and freely accessible information that can be obtained by any American contemplating any trip outside the borders of his own, his native land, is that supplied by dealers in foreign currency, including many banks and reputable private exchange houses: Perera Co., William Holzman & Co., Deak & Co, Perera, Manfra & Brookes, Mauriello & Fontana Co., and others. What these firms can tell the traveler about rules and rates pertaining to the money of the countries which the traveler intends to visit is invaluable. Much of this same information can be had from up-to-date guidebooks and hep travel agents. But even the best guidebooks and travel agents often fail to stay abreast of latest developments in the money field, whereas a dealer who is buying and selling foreign scratch on a day-to-day, sometimes an hour-to-hour, basis makes his living by knowing what is what at all times. He can tell you in a minute exactly how much of the local wampum you are legally permitted to take into any country, and what it will be worth, officially, after you get there, and whether you can save something by buying it more cheaply from him, and how much the saving will amount to, or if you are simply wasting your time. In dealing with American banks which do not specialize in this field, it is only necessary to look out for exchange clerks, and others, who sometimes confuse free-market buying-and-selling rates for currency, about which they may be even more uninformed than you are, with the so-called "free" rates for international bank transfers which appear on the financial pages of many American newspapers. These latter are for the use of organiza-

tions like clearing houses and Federal Reserves, and can be very misleading in any discussion pertaining to the passage of green crinkly stuff from hand to hand. Free-market foreign currency rates do not necessarily coincide with foreign-exchange quotations that appear in American papers of general circulation.

Currency rates are, however, printed daily in many European papers, including the Paris edition of the *New York Herald Tribune*, the best English-language paper published on the continent and one which is rarely more than a day or two behind time even when purchased outside of France. This paper, in common with many other European publications in other languages, quotes free-currency rates on the Geneva *bourse*, Europe's central money market, and these rates, by and large, control currency dealings all over Europe, in legitimate fields as well as not-so-legitimate. Any traveler going to Europe by way of New York, the main portal for transatlantic tourist traffic as well as the main American market for foreign money, should seize the opportunity to investigate the advantages, if any, of buying his foreign spending stuff in that city, unless he has already been able to explore the field in his home town. Should circumstances land him, uninformed and unprofited, in Europe with nothing but dollars in his purse, the European press is ready to hand with the information he needs to trade his dollars at best advantage. So, also, is the European edition of *Newsweek*, which summarizes New York dollar-buying rates for European currencies and is, while not a strictly accurate guide to the European market, fair enough. If the traveler goes by way of Switzerland, Portugal or Tangier he will find there the same unrestricted trading in all European currencies, the same sources of last minute information about it, as he would in New York City. In Belgium, Luxem-




bourg and Italy the "Change-Exchange-Cambio-Wechsel" signs are an open invitation to come in and chat about bargains in folding money, even if such bargains are no longer to be found on every bush. In an increasing number of other European countries the traveler will find respectable bankers burning with eagerness to sell the neighboring country's bank-

notes for dollars at free-market rates, although the same bankers are liable to get very stiff and proud and talk about calling the *polizei* if you broach the subject of a similar deal in their own kind of collateral. In the latter circumstance, some travelers slink around the corner to the local black market, which is illegal.

I hardly ever advocate law-breaking. Anybody who does so, particularly in print, is going to have a rough time later explaining about ethics and upright behavior to his kids. And the fact of the matter is that most of Europe's black markets are finished, or nearly so. A few still offer some attraction to unscrupulous American carpetbaggers, and no discussion of the foreign-exchange racket would be complete without some reference to the way European black markets operate, however revolting this subject may be to persons of high moral caliber.

Where a black market exists, you do not have to hunt for it. It will find an American as unerringly as a good bird dog finds quail. Some years ago, before the German deutschmark had strengthened to a point where street-corner dealings in it ceased to offer a profit, one operator in the market performed a nearly impossible feat in picking me out of a crowd on the Reeperbahn in Hamburg, where Elva and I were rubbernecking. The Reeperbahn is a kind of gilded fleshpot down by the Hamburg docks which combines some of the features of New York's Times Square with those of the Place Pigalle in Paris: cabarets, dance joints, stripped-to-the-waist girlie shows, movie houses, bars, lots of blare and neon lights, sin according to taste and bankroll. The joints are pretty hot at any time, but this was a Saturday night in the middle of *fasching*, the German carnival season, and the street was so packed with *gemütlich* Germans and visiting Scandinavians from across the

border that nobody could walk, only drift. Almost everybody wore a costume of some kind, and those who didn't have costumes wore masks at least, because if you don't wear a mask on the Reeperbahn during *fasching* you either get kissed, doused with perfume or lose your pants, depending on whether you are female, male or a Swede. I don't know why taking the pants off Swedes is a favorite sport in Hamburg, but it is, particularly during *fasching*. Anyway, Elva wore one of those black domino things and I had a red false nose mounted in one piece on earhooks with a pair of imitation goggle eyes and a mustache. My own mother might have shuddered to see me, but she would have passed me by. In addition, I was further disguised by a French beret, an Italian scarf and an Austrian overcoat, which covered all of me that showed. Elva and I weren't even talking English to betray our nationality, because we had temporarily drifted apart in the press of the crowd and were trying to work our way back together by dead reckoning. Yet one of the *schwarz*marketeers standing on the curb looking for business as I floated by plunged without hesitation into the crush, worked his way over to me, and grabbed me by the lapel of my Austrian coat.

"Wanna change dollars, Jack?" he said.

I said, "No spik Inglees," through the false nose. Sometimes it saves time not to argue.

"I'll give you a good price for currency," he came back, not at all fazed. He still had me anchored by the lapel. "Fives? Tens? How about traveler's checks? Got any gold coins?"

He finally let me go only when he saw I wasn't going to do business with him. It was against the law in Germany, then, and anyway his rates were seven points below what I could get from the *portier* at my hotel. The point I make is that they are all equipped with radar or X-ray eyes or something similar

which enables them to spot a dollar bill through eight inches of lead. I have had them put the arm on me from Istanbul to Oslo, in fair weather and foul, and never any question in their minds but that I was an American with American money in my pockets, whatever language I fought them off with. They are uncanny, and frequently crooked.

In dealing on the black market, one must be reasonably careful. I have no personal acquaintance with black markets that I want to confess in writing, but it might be said that I have studied the subject academically and talked to experts. What follows is authentic wisdom, the siftings of several good minds unencumbered by any moral or ethical inhibitions whatsoever so long as there is a profit available.

You never do business on the street corner or in an alley with somebody you don't know. This is not because you are liable to be scragged for your pocket money, because street scraggings of honest citizens are less prevalent in Europe than they are in Ann Arbor, Michigan, in spite of reports to the contrary. But you can be and frequently are short-changed or slipped the old green goods, and you have no legal recourse. Any time an operator offers more than the going black-market rate for your dollars, or seems inclined to let you set your own price too high, it is not because he likes your face but because he is going to wallpaper you. And dealing with these characters is not even necessary. Most tradesmen eager to turn a deal will give you a fair rate for dollars if you indicate that you would love to buy whatever it is they are offering for sale except that you have nothing but dollars on hand and are disinclined to exchange them at any less favorable rate than you did in Switzerland a few days ago. The *concierge* at your hotel, who is the next best friend you have in the world after your travel agent, either deals in the market himself or has a brother-

in-law who does, or will tell you where to go, and he will usually get you a fair rate because he expects, and is entitled to, a reasonable tip when you leave the place. Besides that, he can lose his job if there is a squawk from a dissatisfied customer. But it doesn't hurt to shop around, even among *concierges*. Change a little money instead of a lot until you have felt out the best price.

Another thing notable about European *concierges* is that they are a lot more inclined to trust in an American's honesty and sense of fair dealing than his own banker would be. A friend of mine, known rather widely as Seven Beers because of his drinking habits, once negotiated a deal with a *concierge* at a hotel in Barcelona involving $500 worth of French francs. Seven Beers was on his way to Gibraltar on business, and planned to return to France, where he was living, with francs bought at the free rate on the Barcelona black market. He made connections with the *concierge* and asked him if he would accept a personal check.

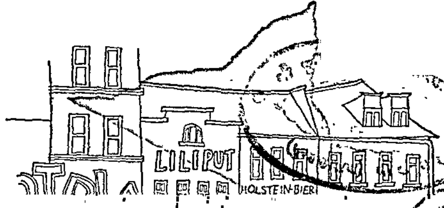
"But certainly." The *concierge* raised his eyebrows. "Why not?"

Seven Beers said, "O.K. I'll leave it with you now, and by the time I get back from Gibraltar it will have cleared through the bank and you can give me the francs."

The *concierge* raised his eyebrows even higher. "Why should you give me the check now? I might be dishonest, and disappear with your money before you get back. It will be much better if we exchange the check for the francs after I find the francs."

"What if the check isn't any good?" Seven Beers was honestly curious.

The *concierge* got his feelings hurt. A Spaniard's sense of honor is pretty close to the skin, but you would hardly expect


LILIPUT
HOLSTEIN-BIER

to insult even a Spaniard by implying that *he* might reasonably have grounds not to trust *you* $500 worth. Seven Beers had to apologize, and the deal came off to the satisfaction of both parties. Seven Beers cleared a nice profit on the transaction, as easy as falling off a log.

Americans are almost never clipped in a deal with a *concierge* or a bartender or an established tradesman or somebody else having a fixed pitch for doing business, as opposed to the generally untrustworthy *types* who brace tourists on the Champs Élysées with the familiar come-on: "Wanna change dollars, Jack?" The rate a dollar-seller should get in any fair black-market deal in Europe lies somewhere between the official rate and the current Swiss free-market rate, as near to the Swiss rate as is reasonable in view of the dollar-buyer's need to make a profit on the deal himself and subject to local and seasonal pressures such as a concentrated flood of buying power to drive down prices in a given locality. This might happen in mid-summer at the Franco-Spanish border, for instance. There I have seen such a mob of vacationers buying pesetas in Perpignan before entering Spain that the free peseta rate, normally a comfortable margin better than the official rate, was actually depressed below the official rate. But local distortions like this are encountered only by people who wait until the last minute to do their shopping, a bad idea at any time. Free exchange rates usually strengthen, relative to the dollar, during the summer season because more people are buying exchange at that time. It is thus generally more profitable to buy foreign currency ahead of the season, and it doesn't matter what happens to the exchange rate later. One peseta is always worth one peseta in the country where you spend pesetas, even with a steady strengthening of that money.

In all of Europe today only Turkey continues to offer a

really fat black market for dollars. Turkey's pegged exchange rate is so unrealistic, its restrictions on imports so tight, that criminality practically forces itself on visitors with hard money. A dollar is worth nearly three times what the Turkish government says it is worth, and almost any Turk in business will cheerfully trade on that basis. Conversely, in Yugoslavia, where the official rate of exchange for a dollar is equally unrealistic, no private citizen has enough dinars to buy a dollar at its true value in the first place, and anyway the Uprava Državne Bezbednosti, or Communist secret police, would bang the tar as well as the profits out of any nogoodnik caught monkeying around with this kind of private enterprise. So no dice in Yugoslavia. Not much doing in Greece, either. There the hopeful tourist with a pocketful of dollar currency to work off on eager hard-money buyers finds that dollars aren't in the running with more popular gold sovereigns. In other closed countries either the official exchange rate is close enough to reality, or restrictions on the import of free-market money are liberal enough, to hold the domestic black market in check even when it does not die completely from lack of nourishment. Both Spain and Finland permit a fairly liberal import of their own currency by visiting foreigners, as well as reasonably sensible "tourist" rates of exchange; England and Holland are less liberal about imports but more realistic about the relationship of official exchange rates to the facts of life, and Norwegian, Swedes and Danes frown on black-market transactions as unethical even when there is profit in them. But even in Scandinavia the black market rears its stealthy head as soon as a spread develops between Swiss free rates and official domestic rates of exchange.

In spite of the fact that France is completely "open," without any restriction at all on the importation of its own money by

foreigners, a black market still survives in that country. There isn't the gravy in it that there used to be, by a long shot, but large-denomination dollar banknotes, *grandes coupures* of $100 and $1000, command a nice premium over par, smaller bills somewhat less. I don't know what a $10,000 note would be worth, in French francs, and it must be a matter of academic interest to most travelers, but its value would be considerably more on the Paris black market than on the legitimate free market across the border in Switzerland—this because the denomination, as well as the dollars, has value in France, whereas in Switzerland ten grand is simply ten grand, in one piece or in a lugbox. It's one of the gimmicks.

In France, as elsewhere in Europe, small bills are naturally much easier to market with the hotel *concierge* than are the big leaves.

France also has the so-called "capital" or "tourist" franc, which offers the visitor a somewhat better domestic deal for his dollars than official exchange. These may legally be purchased (sometimes) within France by non-residents; only with traveler's checks, drafts and such kinds of paper, not with dollar currency, and only from banking houses having an agency in New York, which means practically every banking house that functions. There are restrictions on the use of these "tourist" francs, and in any event they sell for only a little better than the pegged rate and are never as profitable an investment as the free francs which any traveler can legally bring into the country with him by the bale from New York, Belgium, Switzerland, Andorra, Portugal, Tangier, Luxembourg, San Francisco and points west. Tourist exchange in Spain and Finland is different. This you can buy with hard currencies practically anywhere in those countries, and the rates are fairly close to Swiss rates for free exchange, the importation of which is restricted.

As long as the import of French francs into France is unlimited, and as long as any spread remains between official French exchange and free French exchange (the spread is variable, but it exceeded ten per cent for a good while last year), travelers should not overlook a further legitimate advantage stemming from French liberality toward the tourist trade. France is one of the very few countries in Europe which permits Americans to pay for international transportation, such as a plane ticket to Edinburgh or all-in-one purchases of boat passage to Los Angeles and train fare from there to Las Vegas, with its own soft money instead of demanding foreign hard money. By buying at one transaction, *in France,* direct continuing transportation originating *in France,* the traveler can go almost anywhere in the world by any non-interrupted combination of carriers on a ticket acquired for francs; by rail from Marseilles to Nice, by bus from Nice to Genoa, by ship from Genoa to Piraeus. It's all one direct continuous trip, as is Paris–Le Havre–Los Angeles–Las Vegas. And when you pay the over-all tab for that one in French francs which have cost you less than par, they are credited to you at par not only for the French end of the trip and the boat ride to America but for dollars necessary to buy the train ticket from L. A. to Las Vegas. No federal transportation tax on the railroad fare, either. In effect, you have spent a certain number of dollars to buy francs which the French government courteously reconverts into a larger number of dollars than you started with. This is exchange-juggling at its most enjoyable.

Much the same situation prevails in Belgium, although Belgian francs are usually so strong on the free market that there isn't any great profit in the breakage between free and official exchange. As has already been pointed out, with lump in exchange. Even when the French breakage is too low to make a dollar-franc steamship ticket conversion profitable, the

moneys, can be used by the foreigner to buy his fare onward or homeward should never be forgotten. This knowledge alone can save gray hairs for a traveler who may have acquired a potful of francs by trade, theft or a spin of the roulette wheel, only to discover that their export, unlike their import, is restricted and he is up against a stern buyer's market.

There are other exchange quirks which can often be exploited for legitimate profit by anyone with free dollars at hand. Again in France, many tradesmen are authorized to accept dollar traveler's checks for purchases, and in computing the exchange rate will discount their franc prices by as much as 15% if you carry the purchases away with you, 25% if you have the stuff shipped to your homeward-bound plane or ship, or directly home. Dollar currency is no good for this kind of a deal, but if you are fresh out of traveler's checks you can buy more as easily in Paris as you can in New York, and discounts of 15% to 25% are more profitable than anything else that can be done in these hard times with dollar bills. Italy has the Italian Tourist Economy Plan which offers off-season discounts of from 10% to 25% on transportation, hotels, meals and entertainment for visitors who talk business in terms of dollars with American travel agents ahead of time. Not a few shopkeepers in soft-money countries will sell goods for dollars at better than official exchange, many European governments eager to gain hard money offer attractions from time to time, mostly in the field of domestic transport, for visitors who will lay dollars on the line instead of exchanging them for domestic cabbage first, and as a matter of cold but unrelated fact Great Britain sells bargain railroad transportation this way possibly to divert attention from the fact that pound sterling currency issued by many Scottish banks, negotiable at par all over the United Kingdom, can be

bought in New York City for fewer dollars and cents than equivalent pound sterling currency put out by the Bank of England. The reason for it is beyond any sensible explanation I ever heard, and since only limited amounts of English or Scottish pounds can be imported by the visitor to England, this nugget of information won't do anybody much good unless he smuggles the stuff. It may be repeated, however, that a good foreign-exchange banking house is a mine of valuable information pertaining to the profitable conversion of dollars into other currencies in advance of a European trip, while American branches of European national tourist bureaus will tell you about inducements to spend the dollars with them instead.

All European countries, closed as well as open, permit the visitor freely to export all the dollars, traveler's checks, foreign bills of exchange, gold, silver and other bullion he can prove he has brought with him into the country. Except for Switzerland-Liechtenstein and Portugal, however, they all restrict or prohibit the export of their own currency in some way, and while only a dope would want to run off with any quantity of money less stable on the world market than the Swiss franc or the Portuguese escudo, European governments are generally as interested in preventing the escape of their own money to free markets as they are the escape of valuable foreign exchange. Accordingly, all countries provide for, and a few enforce the usage of, a written declaration of currency imports by visitors, or note in the visitors' passports the amounts of sizeable quantities of spendables they bring into the country. Exchanges transacted within the country are supposed to be similarly recorded, and when the time comes to say good-bye these documents or notations are theoretically the basis for getting remaining funds out of the country. The conscientious

traveler may feel like declaring all the dough he is bringing with him across a border, when and if he is asked to do so. On the other hand he may not, some people being as pigheaded as they are, and in any event it doesn't matter a bit. Whether or not the visitor does business with a free-exchange house within the country, or even trades on the black market, in neither event acquiring the proper notations for a recognized exchange transaction, no questions are ever asked if he leaves with *less* hard money than he has declared; no customs official would dream of questioning his word or searching his pockets, either on arrival or departure, and half the time the declaration forms are not even picked up by customs when the traveler leaves the country, which makes the control no control at all. I still retain souvenirs of this nature in the Italian, Swedish, German, Spanish and French languages, and one of the most infuriating experiences I can remember was an occasion when, after spending some months with Elva and Kendal in Spain, during which time I conscientiously lived up to the letter of the Spanish law, rigidly avoided the black market, had all money transactions properly noted in the family currency declaration and could have sneered down a team of bank examiners on leaving the country, I couldn't find a single customs official who would look at the damn declaration, much less check the arithmetic, or even take it from me. Next time we went back I lied like a fiend about the number of pesetas I had in my pocket, as a matter of principle and not because I was bringing in more that I was supposed to, although I could have.

A traveler to any European country should acquire some, at least, of that country's cash ahead of his arrival at that country's borders. Even though there may be no great profit in buying it at free market rates, as is true of most open countries to-

day, or the amount which he can import is limited, as is the case in the closed countries, it is nevertheless useful in the pocket for tips, border charges, cabfare, lunch and cigarettes. The exchange dealers who lurk in places where these immediate charges must be met by newly arrived visitors never give the most favorable rates for the visitor with nothing but dollars or traveler's checks.

Carrying currency from country to country is not necessarily an invitation to European robbers, as is widely believed. I do not mean to suggest that it is wise to go around flashing packages of legal tender in European bars and dark alleys, because flashing packages of legal tender will earn you a Mickey Finn or a rabbit punch almost as easily in Europe as it will in Los Angeles. Reasonable caution is always wise. But I have never lost a dime to a thief, and I usually carry as much and as many varieties of cash as I can, profitably. I left Switzerland one summer with a collection which included American dollars, Austrian schillings, German deutschmarks, Danish kroner, Swedish kroner, Norwegian kroner, Finnish finnmarks, Dutch guilders, Belgian francs, French francs and English pounds sterling, all of which I had bought in Berne at the best rates. It made a nice, colorful stamp collection. I carried what I was going to spend with me at any time in my pants pocket, and kept the rest in a paper bag locked inside a large, conspicuously labeled suitcase in my room. Crooks do not break into hotel rooms to run off with conspicuously labeled suitcases if you keep your trap shut about what is in them other than your clean shirts. The alternative to this procedure is to deposit funds in hotel safes as you go along. But this is a nuisance, and some hotel clerks want you to count the stuff in and out of hock under their eyes, as well as under the eyes of dishonest people who occasionally hang around hotel lobbies on the

watch for other people who take valuables out of safes. The locked suitcase and the closed trap are a better bet.

One drawback is that if you ever *do* lose your roll, you are busted beyond repair. As a notice I once saw in a Turkish hotel put it, "The Direction don't answer for values and precious things leaved unguarded in the rooms," and there is no form of insurance you can write to cover an unlimited amount of stolen currency. If a quantity of loose cash on hand worries you, stick to traveler's checks and pay a premium for peace of mind.

The safest, not the most profitable, way to carry money is in American Express dollar traveler's checks. You are protected all down the line; against loss, theft or destruction. Other types of traveler's checks are not so useful. This is not a reflection on the financial stability of the firms which issue them, only a comment that American Express paper is widely known and readily tradable in remote corners of the world where other kinds are not known and trusted. A good combination is a sheaf of traveler's checks and a sheaf of dollar currency as well—ones, fives, tens and twenties, with larger bills when you are going to have time to market them. The one-dollar bills are useful everywhere for small trading and tips when you run short of local currency, the larger sheets frequently command a premium over traveler's checks when you deal with private exchange traders. On the other hand, traveler's checks occasionally sell at a premium over cash in markets like Lisbon and Zurich, where money follows standard banking channels instead of passing anonymously from hand to hand. Both kinds of paper on hand make it feasible to trade at an advantage in all circumstances.

Regardless of declarations, laws, rules, regulations and moral

implications, every traveler should have getaway money on hand and easily accessible at all times, wherever he may be. A wad of dollar currency, as much as you can afford to earmark for emergencies, should be stuffed into a watch pocket or pinned to a brassière, whichever appears appropriate, then forgotten, at borders and elsewhere, until an emergency arrives. The feel of a spare fifty or hundred is very comforting when the breaks go against you.

I drove all the way from Linz, in Austria, to the German border west of Salzburg one cold winter afternoon before I discovered that I had left a brief case behind which contained not only the family passport but papers for the family car, my driver's license, all other identifying documents I owned, and practically all the money I had in the world. I realize that this confession is against my own interests, but facts are facts even though my ears burn at the memory of the snappy repartee about age and failing memory which my wife and daughter tossed back and forth over my bowed head while we were driving a hundred kilometers back to Linz hoping to find the brief case still inviolate, as we did, luckily. We were hungry and nearly out of gas when I discovered the loss, night was coming on, it had started to snow, I had only a few schillings in my pocket, and I knew nobody in that part of the world who would hold still for enough of a touch even to fill the gas tank. But I did have a $50 bill tucked away where even my wife couldn't find it, and it changed the course of history.

In Spain you get something under 39 pesetas for a dollar at controlled exchange, usually something over 40 for a dollar when you buy peseta currency outside the country, and take it in with you. Several of the larger New York banks are authorized to accept dollar deposits at this end and pay you

pesetas *in Spain* at a higher-than-free-market rate, currently 42½ to the dollar. It may change tomorrow, but that's nearly 10% more for the money just by using your head.

The State Department's removal of restrictions on travel by U. S. nationals in Russia, Poland, Rumania, Hungary and Czechoslovakia (Albania and Bulgaria are still barred, for the moment) and the announcement by those countries of an intention to go after some of the hard-money tourist trade will tend to broaden the field in which a skilled sharpshooter can look for benefits to be obtained by exchange juggling. To date, unfortunately, Russian currency and the currency of its east European satellites are difficult to find on the free market, and even when you do stumble on an occasional cache of rubles or zloties their re-importation into the countries where they are spendable is strictly limited. Since money black markets do not flourish in countries where the secret police slap the ears off citizens caught committing private enterprise, Americans planning to travel in communist Europe can only hope that the new growth of tourism in that area will bring some of its money out into the open where the law of supply and demand can operate on it, after which the same unscrupulous capitalistic carpetbaggers who smuggle free-market dinars into Yugoslavia to cut travel and living costs in half can be counted on to perform the same subversive operation with Hungarian forints. The pegged exchange rates for communist moneys are so ridiculously out of line with true values that the average American traveler's bank account simply will not stand the gaff if he abides by the rules.

Recognizing this truth, Russia's Intourist is making available special tourist package deals which offer, at not too unreasonable prices in terms of dollars, hotel accommodations, meals, transportation and guide service in the various categories of

de luxe, first class, second class and on down. Budget-minded travelers to Russia should note that if they travel alone they are obliged to take the "de luxe" package, at the highest price level. Groups of four or more may go "first class," at a lower price, and larger groups are entitled to further reductions in cost. Also in the trimmings, as might be expected.

But I am now wandering outside the borders of Europe, as previously defined for the purposes of this handbook, and a problem of more importance to most Americans than rates of ruble exchange is the basic one: Where does the average working stiff get the dollars to finance a trip to Europe, at whatever exchange rates, with Mama and the kids yammering to go along too?

Pan American World Airways answered that one a few years ago by introducing installment-plan financing into the field of travel, making a European tour as readily available to a wage earner as the home workshop, TV and an automobile. Pan Am's short-lived monopoly in the field was ended by a flood of similar plans instituted by other airlines; they now all offer Europe at 10% down, twenty months to pay. American Express pioneered with an even more liberal financing scheme; nothing at all down, three years to pay, and other travel agencies, as well as banks, automobile clubs and personal loan companies, did not take long to fall in line. Today, any regularly employed person with a good credit rating can promote a trip to Europe for himself and his family, with transportation, hotels, meals, sightseeing tours, shopping, tips, cigarettes and pocket money all financed on the time-honored principle of pay-as-you-earn. There is, as might be expected, more than a small charge to cover postage and handling in any such arrangement, because financing institutions don't operate for free, but anybody who can afford to finance an automobile on

time can afford to finance Europe on time, and if there is an additional credit risk for the financing agencies in the fact that a trip to Paris can't be repossessed, nobody seems to have found out about it yet. As a matter of cold statistical fact, one financing agency was able to report at the end of its first year of operations with travel on time that not a single Goer Now, Payer Later had defaulted. This will help keep financing costs down for the next batch of borrowers.

Widespread recognition that today's traveler is in the low-income brackets and operating on a budget that requires him to cut financial corners is reflected in the increasing number of frank appeals to slim purses offered by the European travel industry. Last winter the international airlines extended the benefits of "family plan" reduced fares to transatlantic flights, permitting a traveler to take his wife and children abroad at a very good saving in the total fare if he could arrange to do so during December, January, February or March. Italy's Tourist Economy Plan offers discounts ranging up to 25% in hotel, food, transportation and entertainment costs for visitors arriving in the winter months. Germany extends its similar "thrift season" benefits to include reductions of up to 50% in the price of theatre tickets for foreigners. Swiss and French Alpine hotels cut costs for guests who will sign up for at least a week during the winter, and one-piece packaged air tours from New York to Alpine centers come on the market at rock-bottom prices at this time of year. The French government packages low-cost all-inclusive tours of its countryside with a 30% discount of fares on its fine railroad system, and the famous *Guide Michelin*, heretofore the Bible of gourmets to whom cuisine is a sacred thing not to be mentioned in the same breath with vulgar money, now indicates a special category of French restaurants in which a good meal can be had at an all-

inclusive price of less than two dollars. Yugoslavia offers discounts to foreigners for no other reason than that they are foreigners bringing foreign funds into the country, and every other European country has at least one off-season, off-beat or off-price vacation teaser aimed directly at the heart, hopes and pocketbook of today's traveler, the wage earner taking his vacation from the job. With a dozen different agencies battling to lend him the money, take him there, arrange his hotel reservations, dine him, wine him, escort him around and bring him safely home again, a new day has dawned for John Q. American. Europe is his playground at a dollar down and a dollar a week.

# 3

## I PACKED MY GRANDMOTHER'S TRUNK

*Some recommendations against loading up with junk in anticipation of a European trip. A very few things a traveler should acquire in the U. S. A. before shoving off. Passports, visas and other documentary fardels, in a nutshell. Special documents for a few odd European corners. Economical and enjoyable travel during the spring, fall and winter compared with travel during the summer. Transatlantic planes versus transatlantic steamers. Tourist plane flights, off-season reductions, and other ways to cut transit costs to the bone. The importance of arranging reservations well in advance of a summer tour, although not too many and not too rigidly.*

On long automobile trips across north-central Europe, which is kind of flat and monotonous as far as the scenery goes, my

wife and daughter and I used to kill time with a memory game called "I Packed My Grandmother's Trunk."

You can play the game in English or complicate it with as many languages as you know. As we did it, Kendal would announce suddenly, after a series of yawns and bored looks at the speedometer, "I packed my grandmother's trunk with eight quarts of pickled herring."

Elva would continue with, "I packed my grandmother's trunk with eight quarts of pickled herring and a set of the Encyclopedia Britannica."

I would then work a switch, hoping to confuse the other players, by changing languages: "I packed my grandmother's trunk with eight quarts of pickled herring, a set of the Encyclopedia Brittanica, *und ein schweizer mettwurst.*"

Kendal would switch again: "I packed my grandmother's trunk with eight quarts of pickled herring, a set of the Encyclopedia Britannica, *ein schweizer mettwurst, et une motocyclette marque Vespa.*"

It was up to Elva to take it from there, throwing further curves in Spanish or Italian or pig Latin if she felt like it, but always naming the pickled herring, Encyclopedia Britannica, Swiss sausage, motorcycle mark Vespa, etcetera, etcetera, as the list grew, in proper order and in the right languages, until somebody's memory failed. Before the game ended, as it always did, in a snarl of confusion and hot arguments about who had said what, grandma's trunk got packed with more assorted useless impracticable junk than you could find in a boneyard.

This is by way of suggesting that too many travelers to Europe prepare for the trip by loading themselves and their bags down, like grandma's trunk, with too much dead weight. There is a prevalent feeling among many Americans that

Europe, although known to have been civilized in a general way for around two thousand years, is still kind of primitive in spots, and a cautious traveler should prepare for a European tour as he would for a trek across the Gobi Desert, carrying everything necessary for survival. Some guidebooks, even modern ones, advise travelers to purchase and carry with them from the United States a supply of soap and toothpaste. Also camera film and spot remover. Also writing utensils. A heavy investment in cigarettes, for bribes if not for use, is recommended, and travelers on the way to the heart of the world of mode and clothing style, not to mention luggage manufacture, are advised to buy thus-and-so kind of wardrobe before leaving, and pack it in thus-and-so kind of bag. A supply of antibiotics and vitamin tablets is sometimes recommended as well, frequently those brands which are exported to the United States by manufacturers in Switzerland.

I have already invited attention to the fact that any American visitor to Europe who wants to milk everything possible out of a minimum bankroll should have a general knowledge of what amounts and varieties of foreign currency he can profitably take with him. This knowledge pays off directly, in terms of cash. The next most important thing for any traveler to know is what not to take along in the way of material possessions. This knowledge pays off in terms of reduced baggage weight, freedom of movement, and an opportunity to buy whatever he needs in Europe at a lower price than he would pay at home.

Rationing, insofar as it affects tourists, no longer exists anywhere in Europe. There are controls in certain countries, like the restrictions on public boozing in Norway, which affect tourists as well as locals, and if you light for any length of time in any European country you may lose your tourist

status and have to line up with other residents for scarce goods. But a traveler living normally at hotels and eating normally in restaurants is otherwise as free as the breeze. He buys what he wants where he wants and when he wants, without restriction and at prices which range from very low to reasonable. The common requirements of any traveler, clothes, soap, toothpaste, food, spot remover, fountain pens, cigarettes, razor blades, vitamin tablets, luggage, guidebooks and transportation from point to point—in a word, the works—are as readily available to him in Europe as they are in the U. S. A., and because European wage scales are much lower than United States wage scales, labor costs are low and prices at a different level. Price levels in terms of dollars vary from country to country with exchange rates and economic conditions. But nowhere in Europe do they stand nearly as high as general United States price levels. The *quality* of articles like Swiss watches, London-tailored clothes, Italian brocades and German beer is too well known to require a sales talk.

There are, in fact, so few items of everyday usefulness or necessity which are relatively expensive or difficult to obtain or of inferior quality in Europe that it is easy to list them. These, in no particular order of importance, are:

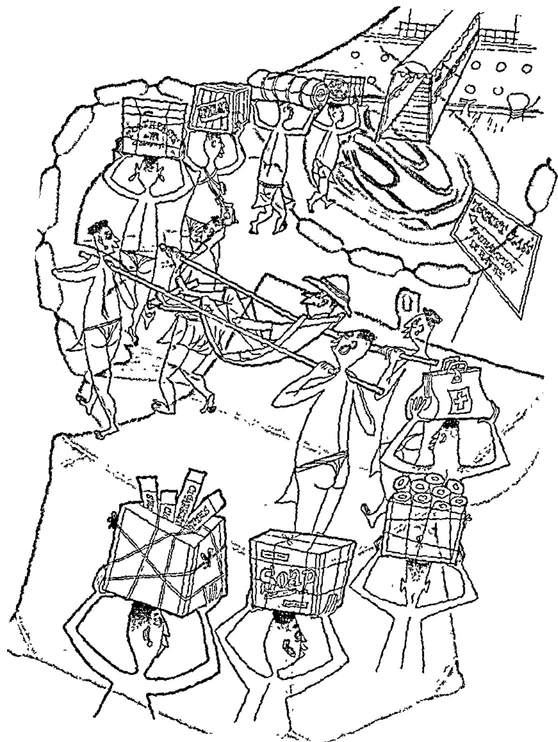
*Plastic fabrics which require no ironing:* nylon, orlon, dacron and such. A pair of the new dacron-and-cotton shirts, great improvements over their clammy plastic predecessors, is enough for most trips; a third, with pleats built in, will do even with tails. These haberdasheries wash quickly and well in a hotel washbowl, and they dry almost immediately. This is an important consideration when you are on a budget, because hotel laundry charges are one of the few costs which are higher in parts of Europe than in America. Even if you care nothing about costs, and I would certainly enjoy meeting

someone who *doesn't*, you are not always inclined to hang around town waiting for the laundry to deliver a shirt. The same goes for wash-and-wear pajamas, hosiery, underwear, handkerchiefs, raincoats and whatever else is added to the category before the summer is over. Women's nylon stockings of United States manufacture generally last longer than those of European manufacture. And if I owned one of those new dacron suits that never have to be cleaned or pressed, I'd be inclined to take it along, although I wouldn't buy several. Not with European gabardines available, and good European tailors working for wages of a dollar a day and up.

*Women's (not men's) shoes.* They don't know how to make these anywhere *in* Europe, including England. The lasts are wrong for anything but an average foot. They look *chichi* enough, but Elva says they give her bunions. (Elva also advises any woman to go to Europe as nearly stark naked as she can manage legally, except for shoes, and buy! buy! buy!) Swiss shoes are the best readymades on the continent for women. Italian cobblers-to-order are good, but expensive.

*Women's low-priced ready-made clothes:* suits, coats, wash dresses and such. New York is the ladies' ready-to-wear center of the world. You can't beat New York for price and quality in this field, and most other large American cities are close behind. I toss this one in for the benefit of husbands. Wives who are dreaming of swank clothes, *haute couture* and high-priced stuff, with or without a famous name sewed into the lining, can be guided by Elva's recommendation in the preceding paragraph.

*Cigarettes,* if you insist on the familiar brands. However, (a) you are limited in the amount you can take into any country; (b) they are no longer good as a medium of exchange or for bribes; (c) you can buy them almost anywhere


Soap

at a price which is usually higher, but sometimes, as in Spain, lower than the price at home; and (d) most countries manufacture a good American-style cigarette of their own, as well as European types which are all right when you get used to them.

*Kleenex* and other facial tissues. These are available but expensive everywhere in Europe. Elva says there is another important ladies' aid in the same category.

*Contraceptive materials.* These are freely available in countries like England, Switzerland, Holland and the Scandinavian nations, but in most Latin countries they must be obtained through a doctor's prescription, or bootlegged. Some countries have rules on the books which prohibit their import. The rule does not extend, in practice, to what may normally be encountered in a traveler's suitcase.

*Color camera film.* It is in short supply in some countries, not all. Black and white film is available almost everywhere.

It's a brief list. Reasonable supplies of these items should be acquired, by purchase, theft or on loan, in the U. S. A., not because they are unobtainable in Europe but because it is easier and cheaper to get them before leaving. It can reasonably be assumed that everybody already owns a toothbrush, shaving tackle and/or cosmetic supply, plus the usual amount of clothes you wear from day to day, a light topcoat and hat in case you land somewhere in the rain, and a suitcase in which to pack a small supply of spare socks and changes of linen. This is plenty of material equipment with which to shove off. Electric gadgets that plug into the wall, razors and traveling irons and electric alarm clocks, can be left behind. Their plug ends won't fit European fixtures, and there are three different voltage standards to worry about, as well as two alternating cycles, and DC as well as AC. A traveler can

buy portable current converters to take with him, but not all of these have the trick of turning DC into AC. Even when they do, Swiss manufacturers do better with similar shavers that wind up like a clock, without electricity or incidental junk. If you must travel with electrical appliances, buy European varieties which work on any current.

If you are going to sail first class on a de luxe liner, not otherwise, you will be out of place in the evening without dress clothes. But anybody who travels first class on a de luxe liner ought to have dress clothes to begin with, and if the old dinner jacket is getting threadbare around the collar there is still no percentage in getting a new one just for a short trip. You can do better for the money on Savile Row in London. The same comment is true of luggage, if it will get you there, it is adequate, and there is no federal excise tax or luxury tax on the fine leather goods sold cheaply in Italy, Portugal, Austria and elsewhere.

If you are heading non-stop for the Austrian Tyrol for ski-jumping in the winter time, you would certainly be kind of dumb not to take along at least one set of heavy underwear to keep you from freezing to death when you arrive, but the purchase of three or four sets is unnecessary. You can do much better buying winter woolen goods in Innsbruck, as you can buying bathing suits for a summer on the Italian Riviera in Genoa rather than in Georgetown. In principle, a European visitor should carry a minimum and plan to purchase a maximum after he gets there. Europe not only gives Americans considerably more for their money, but needs the business, and what you spend there helps ease the load you are carrying when you pay income taxes to keep NATO and SHAPE functioning. The fact that you may unload some of your dollars for foreign currency in New York or Tangier before you even

get to Europe doesn't alter this. Money is spent where it is exchanged for food, lodging and products of the soil, not where it is converted from one piece of paper into another piece of paper.

In the field of really essential acquisitions prior to a European trip, a traveler must have a passport. These cost $10, and any travel agent will tell you how to go about getting one if you don't already know. (Travel agents, generally, are wonderful institutions, and should be patronized whenever possible. Although many now make a charge, overhead being what it is today, for services that once were free to the traveler, expert advice still flows across their counters for nothing. This should not be ignored.) If you are traveling in a family group, one passport will cover the crowd, thus saving ten or twenty or forty or a hundred dollars on the original investment as well as later consular fees, likewise preventing your wife from lamming off across the nearest border with an Italian count. No passport means no passage, with or without counts. Contrariwise, and for the same reason, a family or couple on one passport must stick together at all times, and it is extremely difficult in these circumstances to meet an emergency calling for temporary separation in or across the borders of countries which demand the production of a passport as a prerequisite even to a night's lodging. This factor should be weighed carefully against the other advantage. Passports are good for an initial period of two years, and can be renewed for another two years by any U. S. consul anywhere. After four years you need a new one, but if you are taking a long vacation or sitting out an embezzlement charge in Devonshire, you still don't have to return to the U. S. A. to get it. The nearest United States embassy will oblige.

In all of free Europe, a valid passport is, by itself, without

visa or consular stamp, sufficient to permit any American citizen to travel—as a tourist, not for money-making purposes—in any country except Finland, Turkey and Yugoslavia, and visas for those countries are easily obtainable at their consulates at home or abroad. Visa extensions are securable after you arrive. A visa to pass by land through East Germany, which does not qualify as part of Free Europe, to Berlin, which does, is obtainable by Americans only at the embassy of the U.S.S.R. in Washington, D. C., and mainly in theory even there. On the other hand the East German government welcomes all comers to its great annual Leipzig Trade Fair, the necessary visa and Fair identification card for which can be secured through the German Chamber of Commerce in the U. S. A. Information about visas for other communist countries can be obtained, with patience, at the consulates of those countries.

Generally speaking, three months is about the maximum period an American tourist is allowed to remain uninterruptedly in any European country without getting special permission from the cops. The free period is as short as 30 days in some countries, although those countries which don't require visas will usually forget about the deadline as long as you stay off relief rolls. In visaless countries you can always pop out across any border at the end of the allowed period, get a new date stamp on your passport at the border station, and pop back in again ten minutes later. This is legal, although silly. If you plan to stay any length of time in any country, it is wise to conform to local residence requirements *after you enter the country as a tourist.*

*This is most important. Never enter any foreign country* except as a tourist, regardless of plans to stay. The expense and red tape involved in getting permission to immigrate will kill you. I had been legally resident in France for eighteen

months, carrying the necessary *permis de séjour* and *pièce d'identité*, which I had obtained with no trouble at all from the local *commissariat* for a small fee, before I got a letter from a French consul tentatively rejecting an application I had made in South America two years before for permission to move to France. All I needed, he wrote, was certified proof of financial responsibility and a couple of sponsors to make him reinstate the application for further consideration. I wrote back, from Marseilles, that I had changed my mind about going to France, and heard no more about it.

There is no great direct monetary saving to be derived from a knowledge of the rules regarding visas and such things, but proper information can save wear and tear on the nerves as well as doctor bills for repair to injuries suffered through wandering across the wrong border.

As has already been pointed out, getting a visa to reach Berlin by land is still a practical impossibility. However, East Germany is slowly warming to visitors, like the other satellite states, and it is wholly possible that the same German Chamber of Commerce that hands out visas for Leipzig here in the U. S. A. might get instructions tomorrow morning to cooperate with would-be-visitors to Berlin. In the meantime it is easy to fly there from Frankfurt or Hamburg without a visa of any kind, and with hardly any risk at all of being shot down by a MIG, as there used to be.

A visitor may be offered a choice of one-visit or repeated-visit visas for countries which still require visas. In this case a far-sighted traveler will always plan on repeated visits even if he expects to enter the country only once, because geography and an urge to see the other side of the hill can fool him. European national boundaries being as peculiar as they are, it is sometimes convenient to pass from Upper Slobbovia to Lower Slobbovia by way of a thirty-minute transit through Graustark.

A repeated-visit visa for Slobbovia makes this feasible, where a single-visit visa would leave the traveler bogged down in Graustark waiting for the Slobbovian consul to come back from lunch and give him another.

Non-stop plane passage across any country, with no more than a temporary letdown at landing fields, requires no visa. Since both Russian and Allied armies have de-occupied Austria, the "gray card" formerly necessary for land travel there is a thing of the past, no visa is required of American passport holders, and the whole beautiful *gemütlich* country, including Vienna's new opera house, is wide open to visitors for the first time since the beginning of World War II.

Travelers to Berlin can crash the "little Iron Curtain" between the Russian sector of the city and the Allied sectors without visa or permit, the only opportunity in the world today to see how the other half lives without permission from anybody. Guided bus tours make the trip regularly, with English-speaking barkers to fill you in on the details, and everywhere you go on the other side you see happy, happy, apple-cheeked, well-dressed men, women and child citizens of the East German Democratic Republic beaming at you from big posters made in Moscow. There is also propaganda, from loudspeakers. You can hire a car of your own for the same tour, although it's more expensive, and in either event you will find it as enjoyable to snap photographs of visiting Russian soldiers rubbernecking at the Russian War Memorial as they do to snap you. The only way *not* to go into the East Sector of Berlin, in my experience, is on foot with your wife. I did it once and nearly had the pants scared off me.

It happened because my wife has a theory that the only way to get the real flavor of a big city is to explore it on foot, bit by bit. (I know it's true of Paris and Istanbul, and it may even get to be true of Berlin some day. No promises offered, one way

or another.) Because there were no sentries or barbed-wire to hinder us, we wandered into the eastern sector through the Brandenburg Gate, just to see what things were like on the other side of the Iron Curtain.

We got about three hundred yards in the direction of Unter den Linden, trying to look unobtrusive and German, before we ran into a gang of Communist *Freie Deutsche Jugend*, boys and young men who wore blue shirts to tag themselves as red-hot supporters of The Cause, as their fathers had worn brown shirts for the same reason. It was not hard for us to recognize them, and I guess they had no trouble recognizing us. One of them called the attention of the gang to our approach with, "Psst! *Amis!*"

*Ami* means "friend" in French, but something else entirely in Berlin. I saw one rosy-cheeked, flaxen-haired, lovable lad reach down and pick up half a brick, almost automatically.

Boys who pick up bricks while looking you over are bad enough at any time. But Berlin, particularly in the eastern sector, is still mostly rubble, bombed flat except for square miles of broken brick, shattered concrete and other hard chunks of building material the right size for throwing. And *Ami*, which is a nickname for Americans, is practically the worst thing you can call anybody in East Germany. It means you are a neo-Nazi pluto-democratic lackey of war-mongering Wall Street fascist beasts who scatter atom bombs on helpless women and children, and it is every right-thinking Communist's duty to cure your ideological miseducation with any means at his disposal, bricks included. I knew that once the rubble started flying, we were *kaput*, as the Germans say. Either the *jugend* would finish us off or the East German cops would rescue us. I didn't want to be rescued from anything by an East German cop. They don't like *Amis* either, and once you land in an East Berlin jail there is no such thing as habeas

corpus to get you out again, only diplomatic negotiation.

Another boy picked up a brick, hefting it thoughtfully. Most of them now had their hands behind their backs. They weren't moving or talking, just watching us as we came toward them.

Elva said suddenly, "I'm scared!"

I said, "*You're* scared! Hah!" before my throat closed of its own accord. I thought of turning around and running, but it was three hundred yards back to safety, and a running target is always a temptation. I had already discarded the idea when Elva said, "I'm going to run!"

I took hold of her arm.

"You are not going to run," I said. "They'll start slamming bricks the minute you turn your back to them."

"I'm certainly not going to stand here and wait for them to start slamming them at my face! Let go of me!"

She tried to pull away, I held on, and we struggled. I outweighed her by fifty pounds, but I let her drag me in the general direction of the Brandenburg Gate, holding back every inch of the way, digging in my heels and letting the *jugend* mob see that *I* wasn't anxious to leave, in fact I was going under protest and if it weren't for my wife I would be perfectly willing to wade into all eighteen of them barehanded, any time, bricks or no bricks. Maybe they got the idea, maybe we were too close to the western sector. Nobody threw the first stone, and we reached the boundary weak-kneed but unharmed. Afterward we went back to explore the east sector in a hired car, with all windows closed.

It could be that we were never in any danger at all, and the bricks nothing but a gesture of welcome. I only said that we were badly scared. The statement stands. However, the East Berlin authorities promise that they will have their remaining 4,000,000 cubic yards of rubble cleaned up by 1957,

more or less, so it is wholly possible that after that year it will be entirely safe for capitalist tourists to go for a stroll on the communist side of the city. In the meantime there is no reason at all today why visitors from the western sectors should not feel perfectly at ease in the eastern sector—while they are in a car or bus.

Passports will occasionally be taken away from you, for a few hours or overnight, by hotel *concierges*, air-line and steamship officials, and other people who have to register you with the cops. There is nothing you can do about this except be sure never to check out of a hotel or walk off a ship without your papers. Stories about unhappy passportless travelers being taken for a ride in the salad basket, as the French call a paddy-wagon, or being questioned with rubber hoses under bright overhead lights never apply to Americans. Americans are handled like fresh eggs everywhere in free Europe, with or without passports. But you will be effectively blocked from freedom of movement if you lose the little green book, and there is a lot of red tape involved in getting a new one when you are unable to produce the old one.

The passport, with Finnish, Turkish or Yugoslav visa as necessary, is all the documentation any American needs anywhere in Europe. However, it doesn't hurt to take your driver's license along. Even when you have made no plans to drive you may change your mind, and an American license is valid in many countries, an evidence of your qualification in others. In the absence of special conditions like an epidemic, no European country demands a vaccination certificate, health certificate, marriage license, union card or anything else but the passport.

The U. S. A. requires that you have a smallpox-vaccination certificate not more than three years old before they will let you back into the country, and American officials are much

more inclined to accept without debate a standard-form International Certificate of Vaccination against Smallpox than a wrinkled letter written in Portuguese by a Brazilian doctor, as I learned once by relying on the wrinkled letter. You can get the International Certificate at home, abroad or from a ship's doctor, but most steamship and air-line companies want to see it before they will book your return passage. Nothing else is *required*, although it is *advisable* for travelers anywhere, any time, to have at least anti-tetanus and typhoid shots, just in case. Kids of a certain age need diphtheria and whooping-cough inoculations, too, because hospital bills cost more than a shot or two with a hypodermic needle. These, however, are suggestions, not requirements, and so far I am talking about requirements.

Inoculations, other than the mandatory smallpox vaccination, are things to discuss with a doctor. So also are sleeping pills, seasickness and airsickness remedies and vitamin tablets, if you customarily travel with these in your baggage. But all of them, including vaccinations and inoculations, can be obtained readily in Europe after you arrive, like visas and cheap ball-point fountain pens.

Passports can take time to secure. It is a good idea to start the ball rolling with the State Department well ahead of estimated take-off time. It is also wise to give plenty of preliminary thought to these two questions: when to go to Europe, and by what means of transportation.

*When* is easy. Anybody who can possibly manage it should arrange to travel in the spring or fall, the best possible seasons. If you are a winter-sports enthusiast, by all means plan a trip in the wintertime. As a last resort only, go during the summer months.

There are many reasons for these recommendations. From June through September, all costs are considerably higher,

beginning with transatlantic transportation and continuing through European hotel and resort charges and everyday expenses. Reservations of any kind are difficult to obtain, trains are crowded, buses are crowded, beaches are crowded, favorable foreign-exchange differentials for the dollar are reduced, the hired help is overworked, local *taxes de séjour* applicable to tourists are increased. Not only do several hundred thousand Americans hop over to Europe every year for the summer season, but several million Europeans pack up and move as well. During the 11-day period from July 24th to August 4th of a typical European summer, transportation records show that 1,637,000 Frenchmen left Paris by rail alone, for beach and mountain resorts. This is approximately 150,000 people per day, only by train, only from Paris. Many of these had their own châlets or beach cottages waiting for them at the end of the line, but many more did not, and those who did not absorbed hotel space. Paris itself, like Rome and other large continental cities popular with foreign tourists, is dead in mid-summer. July and August are not good months to visit the capitals.

Spring and autumn, on the other hand, are delightful seasons for travel. The scenery is beautiful, all costs are substantially down from seasonal highs, and the hotel *concierge* knocks his head, instead of yours, on the floor because you are now a paying guest instead of somebody fighting with him for the last available seat on a bus to the beach. The winter is slightly more competitive, because wintertime is a secondary European vacation season, but the situation is very much better all around than it is during the summer. Ideally, for anybody with enough time and money to arrange it, a European vacation should begin during the spring or fall, continue with a comfortable layover at a carefully selected resort during the period when everybody else is scurrying

around trying to find a place to lay his head, and terminate the following fall or spring. There are no drawbacks whatsoever to travel during the fall and spring, only pleasure. An old wives' tale has it that storms at sea are particularly bad about the time of the equinoxes, but there is nothing in it, statistically.

The *how* of getting to Europe, which should be considered at least six months and preferably a year in advance of estimated take-off time, reduces itself to a simple alternative. Barring means of locomotion such as free balloons or water bicycles, and arbitrarily ruling out private yachts, a traveler crosses the Atlantic by steamer or by plane.

Ship travel offers infinite variety and a lot of pleasure. You can spend any amount you want to spend, wallowing in sybaritic luxury and veiled nautch girls up to your eyebrows, or you can do it economically. Unless you are an experienced skinflint, however, it frequently costs almost as much as, and can cost more than, flying an equivalent distance, and do not kid yourself because the initial tab for ship passage may be less than the initial tab by air. There are no reductions for round-trips on transatlantic steamers, as there are on plane flights. On a ship, extras add up even in tourist or student class, the cheapest accommodations obtainable. Good, often excellent, cabins on a freighter cost more and are more comfortable. But getting cabin passage on a freighter is largely a matter of luck and patience, the trip itself is slow, freighter sailing schedules are not reliable, and you, as a passenger, are ranked in importance by the freight, for which the captain will adjust sailing dates as necessary, although he won't wait five minutes for you. If you have plenty of time, a placid disposition and little money, it is worthwhile asking a travel agent to try to book you aboard a freighter, preferably Swedish, Danish or Norwegian. Otherwise, tell the agent well in advance how




much money you have to spend and when you want to go, then see what he has to offer in your price range. *Bearing in* mind the following fundamentals of ship travel, you take your pick of the availabilities.

First-class steamship passage not only costs more *in the* original investment but in the incidentals. You spend more for drinks, you usually need evening clothes and enough of a wardrobe to keep up with the Joneses, and you are expected to tip more heavily. (Not so heavily as you *think*, however. I will get around to tipping later.) First-class accommodations on any ship are the last to be sold out, after cabin and tourist

classes have been booked, so you can sometimes get aboard first class when cheaper accommodations are not available. Money should be no object to anyone who consistently travels first class on transatlantic liners. One de luxe crossing was enough for me. I had a wonderful time and worried about making up the cost for two years.

Cabin and tourist classes on any modern vessel are comfortable, not as luxurious as first class and not offering as much in the way of privacy, private baths and choice of menu, but always providing plenty to keep guests entertained and well fed. One disadvantage, to sensitive people, is the feeling of exclusion caused by the signs here and there around the ship which say "Reserved for First-Class Passengers—Keep Out." Most voyagers can shrug it off. Others suffer, particularly when the first-class passengers, who can move freely anywhere, come down to cabin class for a drink at the bar and stare through their lorgnettes at the rabble, meaning you.

A travel agent can tell you exactly what you are getting in the way of tangibles with your ship passage, if you ask for the information: a bed or a bunk, its distance from the porthole, its distance from the bathroom, the number of strangers who will sleep in your cabin, the schedule of meal hours, what is available to you as a first- cabin- tourist-class passenger in the way of recreational facilities, all the data about speed, horsepower and capacity of the vessel on which you will sail. He can tell you nothing at all about intangible values unless he himself has traveled aboard the ship, and lately.

The intangible factor, by which I refer to things like cuisine, waiters who keep their thumbs out of your soup, courteous bar stewards, generally a smooth functioning of the organization which is there to serve you, the paying guest, is what makes or spoils ship travel. It has nothing to do with powerful engines or snappy uniforms on the ship's officers. This factor

is at its best on transatlantic British, Italian, French and Dutch ships, pretty good on most other European vessels, and generally terrible on American ships.

I make the last statement with considerable regret, not for what small effect it may have on the business enjoyed by the United States merchant marine but because people are liable to call me a Communist and other bad names which are sometimes thrown around loosely when an American criticizes things American. Facts being facts, however, American navigating and engineering staffs, those who handle ships as ships and take them from port to port, are among the best in the world. American ship service staffs, those who handle passengers as passengers, are among the worst. European waiters and stewards are carefully trained to their jobs, do not receive high wages, expect to earn a reasonable amount of tips by putting themselves out to please the cash customers, and never, never, never in any circumstance snarl in response to a simple request by a passenger for a second cup of coffee or some other small favor, because they are liable to get slung off the ship on their ears for talking out of turn. American waiters and stewards are frequently not so well trained, draw very high wages, expect to be tipped whether they earn the tips or not, and frequently demonstrate the undeniable truth that they are as good as you or the next guy and don't have to take any lip off anybody. It is easy to appreciate the justice of this attitude, and if I were myself obliged to earn a living as a ship's steward I would certainly sign on one of the lovely American liners with private baths for the crew, never aboard any old European bucket where wages are low, hours long and [illegible] er, I would not [illegible] slow but comfortable Dutch or Swedish or French or Italian or British ship to the best American vessel afloat. If this be a blow to any

American's national pride, let him travel one way on an American ship, the other way on an Italian vessel, and make up his own mind. All I am doing is suggesting ways to get value received.

Planes are different. The aircraft of the two American flag lines flying the Atlantic, Pan American and T.W.A., and the services they render, rank right up with the best in the world. They do not, however, offer the least expensive way to cross the North Atlantic by air. Icelandic Airlines, a carrier which does not belong to the International Air Transport Association and is not bound, as are its competitors, to the fare schedules of that organization, will get you across and back for quite a bit less than any other line, in or out of season. Icelandic planes are not as fast as some, but they are subject to all safety regulations of the C.A.B. and their pilots are as good as any in the game. Unfortunately Icelandic's service extends only to Scandinavia, Germany and Luxembourg, and is not a great help in getting quickly and inexpensively to the Mediterranean area, for example.

Scandinavian Airlines System has established a regularly scheduled transarctic service between Europe and the west coast of the United States, cutting former distances and fares. Competing lines charge Californians somewhat higher fares than those of the transarctic service for travel between the same points over the longer transcontinental-transatlantic route. With the exception of Scandinavian Airlines and Icelandic, all airlines operating between Europe and North America may generally be expected to quote exactly the same fares at the same time of year for travel between any two given points, so little extra touches in the free-lunch department are all they have to offer as a bid for business. You get plenty of extra touches on the regular transatlantic services: free meals, free drinks, free flowers, free perfumes, free sunglasses, free

traveling bags. Everything is included in one price, which rises or falls from year to year with the whims of the International Air Transport Association but trends steadily downward. "Tourist" flights, which are flown by all I.A.T.A. members and undercut the fares of "standard" flights by a respectable margin, generally use the same planes as the regular flights and cut down on luxuries. You get the free meals, but reduce your luggage weight, sit in a smaller space, and save enough money on the round trip to finance a month at a resort in the Swiss Alps. "Family-plan" travel, available during the November-to-April off-season, can be combined with either "standard" or "tourist" travel to move your wife or husband and an infinite number of children in the 12-to-25 age bracket across the Atlantic and back at savings of up to $300 for the round trip in "standard" flights, $200 in tourist flights—each! The more you spend, the more you save.

Plane travel is not only a great time saver but can often be cheaper than ship travel in spite of the fact that the base charge for "tourist" plane flights is higher than the base charge for the cheapest ship fares. There are no tips or other incidentals to pay on a plane. You get there in one day for one price, which includes everything except alcoholic stimulants consumed in transit, and, on the deluxier flights, even those. On a ship, whatever base price you pay, you must usually count on tips all around at the end of the cruise, a bar bill, deck chairs, bets in the ship's pool, landing charges, laundry charges, all the rest. Ship travel is pleasant, by any standard, if you have the time and can afford the tab. You can also carry a lot more weight with you free of charge by ship than by plane, if you plan to come back with a wardrobe or a baby Austin. The maximum free weight on any transatlantic plane flight is 30 kilos, 66 pounds, of luggage per passenger, and the limit goes down to 25 kilos, occasionally to 20 or 15 kilos, for

shorter plane hops in European territory. Anyone who is going to travel extensively around the continent by plane should bear this in mind when packing, unless he plans to pay for excess weight. But even 15 kilos, 33 pounds, is plenty if you leave the Encyclopaedia Britannica at home. The cheapness and speed of transatlantic plane travel more than make up for its drawbacks.

In either event, by plane or ship, a traveler must start arranging for transatlantic reservations well in advance. Until you have tried it, you won't believe how many people can get in line ahead of you. Many transatlantic trippers book a year ahead for several alternative dates, so they can pick and choose later and cancel what they don't intend to use. Since the situation is becoming tighter every year as the European tourist trade continues to grow by leaps and bounds, it is essential to get in on the ground floor early if you want to have any choice of dates at all.

It is also wise, no matter what plans or lack of plans you have about further wanderings after you reach the other end, to book at least one solid, confirmed hotel reservation in Europe, at your arrival point. Particularly during the summer. You can make other and further arrangements when you get there, and I am about to offer a number of suggestions on how to get from point to point around the continent after you arrive, at reasonable price levels. But cross-hatching strange cities in a taxi trying to talk yourself, wife, baggage and kids, if any, into an already overcrowded hotel during the tourist rush season is no fun, take it from one who has been through the mill. A room and bath waiting for you in a strange city at the end of a long crossing is an oasis in a hot, hot desert. It is in being able to assure you of this pot of gold at the end of the rainbow that a good travel agent justifies his reason for existence.

# 4

## TRAVEL AGENTS AND OTHER EXPLOITABLE FREE NATURAL RESOURCES

*Travel agents and how to milk the most out of them, for free. The packaged tour as compared with free-lance travel. Travel agents and the installment plan, and alternative benefits to be garnered by dealing with European, rather than American, travel-agency offices. European national tourist bureaus and other warm friends of the free-rider. The European hotel* concierge *as the traveler's second best friend when properly handled. Guidebooks of various kinds, and standards by which good ones may be distinguished from turkeys. Miscellaneous sources of important up-to-date information, mostly gratis.*

It has been said many times that a travel agent is a traveler's best friend. To preclude any misunderstanding, I will say it

again, and go further: Any travel agent is better than no travel agent. I wouldn't cross five degrees of latitude without talking to a travel agent about it first. They are a wonderful institution, like Mother. They make few charges for services rendered, provide a bosom on which to pour out your troubles, and hold your mail for you until you find time to call for it. An understanding of how they may best be approached from the motherly, or gratis, side is important to all travelers who hope to keep costs under control.

There are, in essence, two ways to get around Europe, after you have arrived. One is the packaged tour. This can be escorted or unescorted, performed individually or in groups, cover an entire European circuit or only a round of Paris night clubs, and may be very expensive or less expensive depending on whether the packaged guest travels in a private car with solid gold spark plugs or by plane, bus, train or bicycle. Under the package arrangement you work out an itinerary well in advance with your travel agent, set yourself a strict schedule, and then let the agent book advance reservations for you according to the schedule. This kind of tour offers maximum comfort and security, is relatively dull, usually costs more than it should because nobody is working the expense angles properly, and permits the traveler no leeway to spend an extra day or week or month at some beauty spot which may attract him as he passes through. It is frequently an alarm-clock adventure—up with the birds and to bed whenever you find time, but no nonsense about missing the bus. The schedule rules all. To wrap an entire European summer trip up in a single package it is generally necessary to make arrangements months in advance with an agent in the United States, because it will be too late to tie up necessary reservations after you get there. I would not recommend the

all-in-one package tour to anybody unless he has more money than he needs and likes to be told what he is supposed to get a thrill out of instead of making up his own mind.

This is one extreme. The other is free-lance travel—a bundle over your shoulder, a song on your lips, the winding highway ahead of you, and a haystack full of sowbugs to sleep in at the end of a hard day of heel and toe. I do not recommend this mode of getting about, either, except to the young and adventuresome. But there are variations between the two extremes which represent European travel at its most enjoyable. A travel agent can be of great assistance in all of them, if you handle him right.

Travel agents in the United States hope to sell a customer everything they can in advance for a European trip. They make their living this way. But they charge dollars, at least for the deposits they must make on the customer's account to arrange a trip, for the whole bill if they can persuade him to part with the money ahead of time, and send the dollars along to pay European costs at official exchange rates, the least favorable terms for the traveler. There are still several opportunities to turn a small profit on the free exchange market in Europe, but you have to start with dollars that are free for trading, not represented by a meal ticket or a piece of paper good for a night's lodging. Of course if the travel agent is himself financing the trip on an installment-plan deal, he isn't going to unleash any larger amounts of loose currency than he can help, but I haven't got to installment plans yet. So far, cash and carry.

Agents in Europe have an advantage over agents elsewhere by their presence in the field. An agent in Crossroads City, even a member of a large international organization, does not have at his fingertips a complete list of low- and medium-

priced accommodations available in the immediate neighborhood of a de luxe sandbox like Cannes, for example, because Americans in search of low- and medium-priced accommodations don't always realize that there are such accommodations in the Cannes area, and there is a limit to the agent's filing space. His business, at the American end, is mainly with people who are going to bunk at the Hotel Carlton or the Martinez, both high-cost hostelries. An agent of the same international organization in Cannes itself not only has his finger on everything available in town, at all price levels, but can pick up the phone and find out what is cooking in Antibes, Juan-les-Pins and La Napoule down the beach within ten minutes. This is another way of saying that when you are on your way to the market place, you will get better prices by selecting your own fresh vegetables after you get there than by buying them in quick-frozen packages before you leave. Not always with as much variety of choice, and subject to seasonal shortages, but adequate for a balanced diet.

If, in planning a European tour, a traveler contemplates a whirl through London-Paris-Geneva-Berlin-Vienna-Athens-Rome-Madrid-Lisbon and home again in time for dinner, with plane reservations solid all along the way and a room and bath waiting at each stop, then the tour must be arranged in advance and a fat premium paid. There is no getting away from it. But this kind of a trip is what travel agents call a timetable package, and timetables are for business, not pleasure. With two or three weeks and a moderate amount of money to spend, it is much more enjoyable, as well as economical, to select London *or* Paris *or* Geneva *or* Vienna or one of the others as a tentative base for operations, arrange one advance hotel reservation there (for the minimum possible dollar deposit) to preclude the necessity of bedding down in the park during the

first night in town, then look around after you arrive. The same travel agent who functions at home usually has a branch office or a correspondent within walking distance of where you light, and if he doesn't there are others, all eager for your business. They will book you into a more expensive or less expensive hotel if you choose to hang around town, package you a tour or get you train, plane or bus tickets to the next country if you want to move along, provide you with guides, give you free maps of the city, cash your checks, listen to your troubles, and forward your mail.

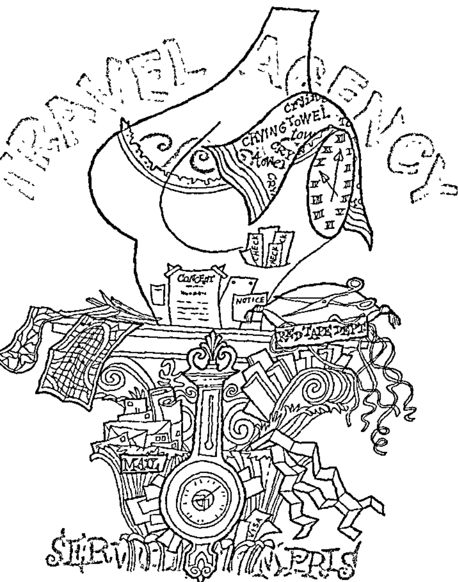
Sometimes they will even finance the whole trip. This is a big step for travel agents, who have traditionally stood at the receiving, rather than the paying, window. But American Express has led the way with the agencies as Pan American did with the airlines, and where PAA and Amexco go, so goes the rest of the travel racket. Installment-plan financing has replaced the horse as a traveler's aid.

Unfortunately, installment-plans are not as manageable as horses, and cannot even be led to water. Anybody who is in the business of selling air transportation or hotel reservations and is also putting up the wherewithal for a European trip is quite understandably going to make certain that as much of the wherewithal as possible will be passed back across his counter, rather than spent with competitors at home or abroad. Travelers on the cuff will generally find it much more difficult to take the cash and let the credit go than the other way around. Installment-plan travel consists mainly of package deals arranged and paid for in advance by the holders of the purse strings, and the unescapable truth is that even if they are able to work any cost-cutting gimmicks like buying French francs on the free market and trading them at official rates for railroad fare to Rome, they, not you, will reap the financial ben-

efits. But the benefits aren't what they used to be, so no great harm done.

The general rule that pre-payment of European expenses with American dollars through American travel agents will cost the traveler more than he ought to pay (and, let it be confessed, considerably simplify the matter of reservations) has a noticeable exception in the Italian Tourist Economy Plan. The Italian lira is currently so strong and so freely traded that no exchange breakage at all can be expected from dollar-lira dealings on the free market. However, the Italian State Tourist Office offers dollar-earners a very juicy off-season package in which discounts of 10%–25% on Italian State Railway tickets, 25% on certain motorcoach lines, 25% on many funiculars, cableways and lake boats, 10% on a lot of hotel and *pension* bills, and 10% on the gross clip at some restaurants and night clubs can be obtained *only* through travel agents operating in North America. This does not mean that you have to book all your night club and lake boat seats in advance, but you do have to open negotiations at this end and get the right kind of an identification card before taking off, or no dice. When this setup is parlayed with reduced-price off-season "family plan" plane fares, to get there, and the generous Italian reduction in gasoline costs given to foreign motorists, in case you decide to do part of a winter tour of Italy by car, it becomes a gladsome thing indeed. Incidentally, don't plan to drive a car of Italian registry in Italy, rented or otherwise, if you're counting on that gasoline discount. Only out-of-state cars get it, regardless of who drives, and without the discount gas goes up to around 90¢ U. S. A. a gallon.

It is to be hoped that other European countries will soon come up with plans of their own as attractive as Italy's I.T.E., and as a matter of fact the returns from it are being watched



TRAVEL AGENCY
CRYING TOWEL
CHECK
CONCERT
NOTICE
RED TAPE DEPT
MAIL
VISA

I took my family to the Balearic Islands one summer for a vacation at the seashore. We were unable to get advance reservations, because the Balearics are popular at all times, but a travel-agent friend of mine got us a cabin on the night boat to Palma de Mallorca, and it seemed kind of shabby thanks to tell him we didn't want it. We went to Palma to keep from hurting his feelings.

Palma was bulging with vacationers. We spent a couple of drab nights sleeping like clumped oysters in a single hot room which my agent friend's sub-agent in Palma got for us by hitting the telephone, and passed most of the time exploring the island of Mallorca trying to find alternative accommodations which would put us within walking distance of the sea. Nothing stirring. I got a tip that Ibiza, another island 70 miles to the southwest, was relatively free from the summer crush. The Palma sub-agent telephoned two or three times to Ibiza without raising a promise of anything good, but assured us we could always sleep on the beach. Ibiza was nice and warm.

We bribed our way aboard the day boat and went to Ibiza, where the Palma sub-agent had a sub-sub-agent, a man who ran the office as a side line to his almond-growing business. He met us at the dock with news that he had found lovely accommodations for us. They turned out to be two crumby rooms, on the seashore but populated with mosquitoes the size of hummingbirds. We slugged our roommates with rolled newspapers for 36 hours while the sub-sub-agent and I beachcombed, looking for something better. Between us we finally found two comfortable rooms and bath, reserved by somebody else but unclaimed, at a *pension* where we spent the most delightful six weeks I ever enjoyed anywhere. (One reason for this was that I paid the whole bill with free pesetas which I had bought at a nice cut below par before going to the

islands.) The place was cheap, congenial, beautifully run, beautifully located, faced one of the loveliest beaches on the Mediterranean, and is from now on my private paradise whenever I am in the neighborhood. There is no point in mentioning names and locations, because once somebody mentions nice little unspoiled out-of-the-way spots in print they stop being nice little unspoiled out-of-the-way spots so quickly it would make your head swim, and anyway this is not a guidebook but a tipsheet. I offer the incident for its moral: Never refuse a travel agent's services when they are available, and never pay him or anybody else hard money as long as you can persuade him to accept soft money where it still exists.

The best travel agencies are the biggest. They have established international networks and connections where connections count. One of the best of all is American Express. I am attempting to avoid specific recommendations in this handbook because as soon as you express an opinion, favorable or unfavorable, about an organization of any kind, travel agencies and island resorts included, the management changes or the chef drops dead and you are out on a limb eating your words. But American Express is so nearly a permanent institution that I do not see how it can change. It has branches or correspondents in every European country except Yugoslavia —it may even get a toehold there, in time—and it offers many incidental services free or at a small charge, mail-forwarding, moneychanging, the issuance of traveler's checks, local maps and tourist booklets, up-to-date information about road conditions and customs regulations, help with visas, permits and red tape generally. There are other agencies which may be as efficient as American Express, but I never had the good luck to find a better one. Whatever agency a traveler chooses to do business with, it is a good idea to patronize branches of the

country's national tourist organization and ask for free literature. It is official source material, up to date and straight from the horse's mouth when you get it.

The national tourist organizations, like travel agencies, are prepared to take the visitor in hand after he arrives, as well as advise him in advance. There is a national information bureau of some kind at every major European airport, railroad station and seaport, in all large cities and resorts, not infrequently even in small towns. Their business is to hand out free information and helpful suggestions in a language the visitor can understand, nurse him when he needs nursing, and see that he leaves the country with a good taste in his mouth. All for free. Tourism is big business in Europe, and these organizations are there to promote it. They function at their best in the British Isles and western and northern Europe, an area which gets most of the transatlantic tourist trade, less effectively in the Balkans, which get relatively little of it.

One of the best of all such systems exists in Holland, which not only has an effective service of several hundred traveler's-aid bureaus scattered all over the country, but has organized a unique Amateur Guides Association, a group of young men who speak several languages, including English, and will guide any tourist anywhere for nothing but the pleasure of his company, accepting not even a tip for the service. The Dutch do not feel that there is anything unusual in this organization, but it is sometimes difficult for Americans to realize that strangers who approach them on the street and offer them something absolutely free, not even a box top required, can be on the level.

And because this frequently happens in Europe, it is important for travelers who want to enjoy their stay there and get the most for their money not to be too snappy about

brushing off volunteer helpers. It takes only a minute to find out what they are trying to offer you, and you can always say no if there seems to be a hook embedded in the bait. Personally, I always say no to people who want to lead me through museums and to girlie-circuses, because while I appreciate all forms of art I would rather explore the possibilities on my own, without somebody breathing down the back of my neck telling me which way to look. Besides, people who hang around museums and girlie-circuses expect a fee for their services, sometimes more than the services are worth. People who come up to you when they see you looking helpless in the middle of the street and say, "May I be of help?" usually mean just that, nothing else. They might accept a tip later, they might not, but they aren't necessarily after your watch. Spaniards and Portuguese are famous for their elaborate courtesy to strangers. So are Scandinavians, and it is in the nature of most Europeans to be helpful just for the pleasure of being helpful, like Boy Scouts. The French consider it a matter of common courtesy to assist foreigners who are not lucky enough to be French themselves and know their way about. I had so many willing French helpers on one occasion that it will color my feeling about France and the French as long as I live.

It was in a small seaside village near Bordeaux, where I bought, after some difficulties, ten meters of light rope to tie baggage on top of a car. Rope buying is relatively easy in the United States, but things are different in France. Shops there

waited for fifteen minutes, then went into a bakery next door to ask the baker if he had any idea what "soon" meant to the ship chandler.

The baker said, "Ah, that one. He's probably asleep. Go around the corner, third house on your left, and throw pebbles at the second-story windows."

My French was still kind of primitive, and I missed the word for "pebbles." I thought he meant cobblestones. While I hesitated, he saw that I was having trouble. He took off his apron and said, "I'll go with you."

We went around the corner and threw handfuls of gravel at the second-story windows of the third house on the left. A woman opened one of the windows.

"Tell Fausto to wake up and attend to his trade," the baker shouted. "The gentleman wishes to make a purchase of rope."

"Fausto has gone fishing."

"What a way to do business! Who is in charge of the shop?"

"*Maman* has the keys. Wait a minute. I'll go with you."

The woman came down to the street, and the three of us went to find *maman*, who lived in the attic of the building beyond the bakery shop, but wasn't home. The *concierge* didn't know where she had gone. Neither did the cop on the corner. Neither did any of several kids in the street whom we asked, but everybody who didn't know ran to ask somebody else, ringing doorbells and shouting at the neighbors. There were six people on my team, not counting women hanging out of windows overlooking the street, when somebody turned up the news that *maman* had gone to the market.

One of the kids went tearing off to get her before I could say that I didn't need the rope that badly. Pretty soon fat old *maman* came chugging up the street, the kid trailing along behind to shortstop vegetables that bounced out of her market

basket because she was hurrying so fast. She was out of breath when she arrived, and I felt like a dope when I explained that all I wanted was ten meters of light rope, but she said OK, or its equivalent. Wait until she got the keys.

While she climbed five flights of stairs to her attic to get the keys, the rest of us stood around and discussed the transaction that was to come. Ten meters of light rope. One would find use for that on a small boat, perhaps? Or in tethering a cow?

I said that in my case it was to tie baggage on top of a car. The black one, over there.

They said Ah, it was a *voiture très chic*. Foreign, of course.

I said it was an English make. I, however, was not English but American. This was what they were getting around to so I made it easy.

The cop, who was nearest to me, said "American" to the baker. The baker said "American" to the woman who had helped us look for *mamen*. The woman said "American" to another woman behind her, and in thirty seconds everybody in the street and most of the neighbors still hanging out the windows had the word. One man, for no particular reason, patted me on the shoulder. I felt like a division of United States Army infantry marching under the Arc de Triomphe.



90 cents, everyone cheered, and the cop shook my hand as if I had just won the *Tour de France*. The baker wrapped my rope in a piece of clean white paper. I shook his hand. Then I shook *maman's* hand, the hand of the woman who had been our guide, all the other hands I could reach, and went back to where my car was parked while the cop stopped traffic so I could get the car out easily. He saluted as I drove away. Everyone else waved good-bye, the neighbors closed their windows, and the whole village went back to work.

It was all a waste of time if looked upon as a business transaction. But I got the rope, which was what counted, and a lot of free assistance from a lot of friendly people. I have had the same kind of assistance to pull myself out of a mudhole on a back road in Montenegro, to explore a wine cellar in Oporto, to cash a check in Copenhagen, to find a doctor in an emergency in Ravenna, even—since the discussion concerns itself mainly with cost-cutting—to cadge free board and room in England. Occasionally I laid out a small tip, sometimes a cigarette, sometimes nothing but "Thank you." The key to it all is the word "American," because the American blood, manpower and billions of dollars' worth of aid that have been poured into free Europe in one form or another during the last few years have bought a lot more than collective security and a let-up in the Cold War. There is good will for Our Side, and do not let the "Americans, go home!" signs of a small proportion of Communist red-hots or occasional outbursts of European indignation against the regrettable behavior of poorly indoctrinated and poorly disciplined American kids in uniform persuade you that the good will is not there for anyone who behaves with reasonable consideration for other people in their own front yards. It exists in every country that ever received so much as a CARE package from the United

France from the *boche* with my own two hands? Was I to be rewarded by being refused a small thing like a piece of rope? A thousand times no! Something could be worked out, somehow. Patience, American.

The crowd had me blocked off from the door, anyway, so we all thought about the problem. The baker said suddenly, "If a kilo of one size of bread is worth a kilo of another size of bread, then a kilo of rope is worth a kilo of rope."

Nobody got it right away, but when he explained it went over big. If ten meters of rope with a price tag on it weighed so many kilos and cost so many francs, then ten meters of my rope would weigh a proportionate number of kilos and cost a proportionate number of francs. It was easy. Everybody patted me and the baker on the back. We were clever fellows, he and I.

There were more complications, including *maman's* reluctance to cut a sample ten meters of rope that wasn't going to be sold, and the absence of something to weigh the rope with. We got around these handicaps by using a one-meter, instead of ten-meter, sample from a tagged coil, and the baker volunteered the use of his bread scale. *Maman* cut the sample, then my ten meters, and we all went to the bakery, with the neighbor-women calling anxiously, "How does it go with the American?" from their windows and the others shouting back, "It marches! It marches!" The baker brushed crumbs off his scale, made a careful adjustment of knobs so that the pointer which indicated the scale was on the level stood exactly at the hairline, and said "*Voilà!*" Everybody had a peek at the pointer and nodded. The baker weighed the one-meter sample, then my ten meters, and *maman* scribbled figures on a scrap of paper and sweated over her multiplication while the crowd held its breath. She finally came up with an answer equal to

90 cents, everyone cheered, and the cop shook my hand as if I had just won the *Tour de* [illegible] in a piece of clean white [illegible] *maman's* hand, the hand of the woman who had been our guide, all the other hands I could reach, and went back to where my car was parked while the cop stopped traffic so I could get the car out easily. He saluted as I drove away. Everyone else waved good-bye, the neighbors closed their windows, and the whole village went back to work.

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States. All any American traveler has to do is accept it instead of turning his back on it. Anybody who would turn his back to the interest on a multibillion-dollar investment shouldn't be wandering around Europe, at least not without a guardian.

Hotel *concierges* are other useful people to have on your side wherever you go. In European hotels a *concierge*, whatever else he may be called, is the man who takes your room key out of the box or off the hook when you ask for it. He may also be the desk clerk, the *portier*, the major-domo, the boy who runs the elevator or the proprietor of the joint, but he is always keeper of the keys, whatever his other duties. This identifies him. He can arrange anything, any time, either directly or by slipping you a connection—theater tickets, money exchange, a city map, decent restaurants, good shops, a companion for the evening, a shoeshine. For this he expects a tip when you leave the hotel, or weekly if you are staying for a long period. It needn't be much of a tip by American standards (I will suggest appropriate amounts in another chapter) and it is one of the best small investments any traveler can make.

Once you have bought him, he is your boy as long as you stay, and will remember you the next time you come back. This may mean a lot when rooms are hard to find and it is raining in the street. He will also suggest a good hotel at your price level in the next town if you have sense enough to ask him, sometimes even give you a note to his fellow-*concierge* at that hotel, which makes you automatically a favored guest when you get there. Besides this service, he will send along to your next address the bedroom slippers you always leave behind in a hotel and would like to recover by writing for them if you could only remember the name of the [illegible] ere you left them. It is the *concierge*'s job to paste l[illegible] els on your luggage when y[illegible] to, thus giv[illegible] well-

traveled look and providing you with a permanent record of the hotels you stayed at in each town. All in all, *concierges* rank right up with travel agents as a traveler's best friend.

Other important and valuable aids to all travelers are guidebooks. Guidebooks, generally speaking, are like circus tents; the more ground they cover, the more hot air they contain, and the more holes you can find in them. No guidebook or handbook or tipsheet, including my own, which rips off all of Europe at a bite and tries to swallow it whole can pretend to provide as much information about current, last-minute prices, border regulations and hotel classifications as a book that takes a smaller mouthful and chews it fine. The French *Guide Michelin*, about which I will say more later, maintains a permanent staff of paid experts working full time with the assistance of hundreds of volunteers among the *Guide's* readers simply to keep the *Guide* up to date on the price range and quality of hotels and restaurants in France. There is no organization in existence large enough to gather even this much practical information about Europe as a whole, put it between the covers of a book, and keep the book up to date. Viewed in this light, guidebooks are reliable or less reliable depending on the extent to which they limit their scope. This means you have to pick them up and lay them down as you go along, like telephone directories. Fortunately English-language guidebooks of every class are available everywhere in Europe, and because many are free and all of them are produced at costs considerably below American printing costs, they are cheaper there than in the United States, as well as hotter from the stove where they are cooked. Any recommendation about traveling light extends to guidebooks as well as to luggage.

A good national guidebook, one which offers a maximum of practical information about travel conditions within a par-

ticular country, is a sound investment *if* it has been revised since the last tourist season. Prices, exchange rates and the merits of a particular seaside resort change substantially in Europe from season to season, and last year's information is as useless as last year's newspaper. Any guidebook, to be worth a whoop in a whirlwind, must contain plenty of factual information, and the more factual it is when printed, the more rapid will be its inevitable march to the ash can. This is one reason why practical, as opposed to cultural, guidebooks to France or Italy are an unwise investment if they cost more than 35¢, as they all do. For the equivalent of that price, the European edition of the *New York Herald Tribune* publishes annually, in Europe, a paperback *Guide for France and Italy* that is the best thing of its kind in print, and can be thrown away without tears at the end of each year.

One volume which successfully defies all the rules about coverage, cost and weight is *New Horizons*, published by Pan American Airways and sold for $1 in their offices and at bookstores. This pocket-sized nifty contains more condensed practical information about 78 different countries than an encyclopedia, and is revised, in practice, even more often than annually. I don't know how they do it for the price, unless—as I strongly suspect—it is offered at less than cost primarily for sales promotion, only incidentally to take the bread out of the mouths of honest travel-writers. The *Guide Michelin* is another of these loss-leader sales premiums.

So also are the passenger-service departments maintained by all international airlines in their European offices, to which an American can turn for advice, assistance and information with considerably more hope of a warm reception than at his country's embassy or consulate in the same city. I am not past-

ing our diplomatic and consular staffs, either; they are busy people, and if they ask visitors to make an appointment, it is understandable. But when you need the address of a doctor in a hurry, the passenger-service departments of the airlines do not ask you for a written application first, or proof of citizenship. They deliver, quickly.

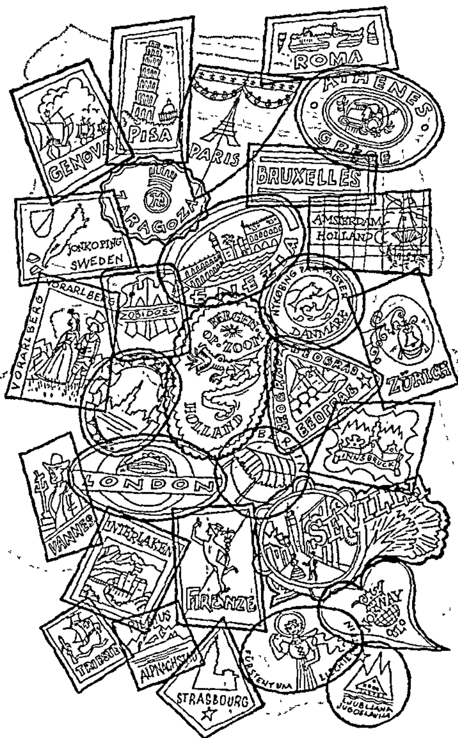
Their free services extend even as far as introducing you to friendly Europeans engaged in social or business activities in which you are interested. Denmark's national tourist bureau performs the same function. This office maintains a list of Danish families who have expressed an interest in welcoming into their homes foreigners with interests common to their own. An equivalent organization is Sweden's "Sweden at Home," through which visiting Americans can arrange to be invited for a luncheon or an evening at home with a Swedish family. And in *any* country it is simple to meet other people who speak a language you do and are friendly.

There are in fact many more European doors cordially open to American visitors than there are American visitors to enter them. A thumping answer to the "Europeans-hate-our-guts" school of thought, prevalent among far too many Americans at home, is in the results of a travel-story contest promoted one summer by the Paris *Herald Tribune*. For small prizes, traveling Americans were invited to sound off on any aspect of Europe which amused, interested or irritated them. No holds barred, no restraints on freedom of speech, no need to withhold resentments. Out of 1,858 entries, the majority related, in good humor, ordinary travel anecdotes. About one hundred and fifty told of specific incidents of kindliness and courtesy extended to them by nationals of Britain, France, Spain, Germany, Belgium, Holland, Italy, Austria, Switzerland, and the

Scandinavian and other countries. Two of the entire list, one-tenth of one percent, took the occasion to report that Europeans were mean to them. Q.E.D.

The best national guidebooks are written by a person or persons living in the country which the guidebook covers. It should tell a visitor how to get there, and contain information about the country's history, cultural background, topography, artistic traditions, currency controls, passport regulations, general price levels and the rules regarding foreigners, all things any visitor should be informed about before he gets there. Ideally, it should also contain more specific information: classified lists of hotel accommodations and prices, recommended restaurants and their price ranges, local seasonal attractions, the opening and closing hours of museums, current road maps and city street plans so a visitor can find his way back to his hotel without tracing a string tied to the hotel doorknob, the addresses of travel agencies and local tourist bureaus, the telephone numbers of unattached chorus girls. A traveler will want all this information after he has entered the country. But because it is difficult for a single book to contain all this, and keep it hot, it is frequently necessary to supplement the best general guidebook with specific guides obtainable cheaply or for nothing most easily within the country's borders.

A hotel guide is essential, either as part of a general guidebook or as a separate publication These pay off in comfortable accommodations as well as the money a traveler saves by knowing a hotel's rates before he asks for the best room in the house. Hotel guides are published in most European countries annually, as giveaways or for a small charge depending on whether they are made available by tourist bureaus or bookstores. They list hotels by location, class and price range throughout the country. It is more difficult to find similar



ROMA
ATHENES
GRÈCE
GENOV
PISA
PARIS
BRUXELLES
ZARAGOZA
JONKOPING
SWEDEN
AMSERDAM
HOLLAND
VORARLBERG
VORARLBERG
BERGEN OP. ZOOM
HOLLAND
DANMARK
BEOGRAD
ZÜRICH
INNSBRUCK
LONDON
VANNES
INTERLAKEN
FIRENZE
NORWAY
OSLO
TRIESTE
ALPNACHSTA
STRASBOURG
FÜRSTENTUM
LJUBLJANA
JUGOSLAVIJA

guides to restaurants, but the *Guide Michelin*, which I have referred to already, contains in one unique and handy volume a maximum of practical information about French hotels and restaurants, annually revised. I mention the *Guide Michelin* by name because it is a respected institution in Europe, like American Express and the Eiffel Tower, and will undoubtedly continue to be respected for years to come. No experienced traveler, whether Frenchman or foreigner, would think of touring France without a copy of the current *Guide Michelin* under his arm. The same house publishes smaller but similar guides to Spain and Belgium-Luxembourg. Any good guide which contains specific current information about hotels and restaurants is better in that respect than any other guide which does not. Everybody has to eat and sleep somewhere along the line, and if you don't know the price range of a place you are getting into, you may be badly shaken when the bill comes around.

Beyond eating and sleeping, it is up to the traveler's tastes. If you are interested in paintings and choose, for example, to explore the National Gallery in London, the best available guidebook to the London National Gallery is sold cheaply just inside the gallery's main entrance. This is generally true of museums, cathedrals, castles and such. You can throw these guides away after using them, because there is no point in cluttering your baggage with something that will be out of date as soon as the management rearranges the furniture.

Similarly, if you itch for night life in the raw in Paris, the best guide in that field is an English-language publication written, in Paris, by a man who knows his way around the slopes of Montmartre as they are at the moment, and doesn't waste your time with descriptions of kootch shows in Berlin in 1949 or a geisha house in Nagasaki before the war. If you elect

to move from place to place by bus, plane or train, the local bus, plane and train systems provide schedules and price lists hot off the press, for free. So do travel agencies. If you are motoring, major oil companies which sell their products in Europe give away maps and handy guides to every European country open to motor traffic, also for free. So do tourist bureaus. A hiker can get trail maps, lists of camp sites and a summary of the law pertaining to use of campfires from the same source, likewise for free. Every city in Europe larger than a hill of beans, and several which are smaller, puts out some kind of a directory to its own attractions. These range from simple street plans through elaborate weekly editions of pamphlets containing not only a city map but cinema attractions, horse-race schedules, museum hours, concert programs and cabarets of the week, to fat and exhaustive city guidebooks. Some are throwaways, some sell for a small amount. A traveler asks for these first from his hotel *concierge*, then at a tourist bureau or information booth, then travel agencies, and as a last resort (because he will have to pay something out of pocket when he gets this far, a painful thing for conscientious free-loaders) at a newspaper kiosk or bookstore. They all provide a working basis for seeing the town.

In European capitals and other metropolises there is always so much to cover that the information won't go into one container, so you need a cheap folding city map, the week's schedule of local attractions, and a small amount of pocket money to buy current specific guides to specific centers of interest.

You can spend a lot more, if you choose, by hiring a guide to lead you around town on a string. It just isn't necessary. Some local boy who knows the town like the back of his hand has put it all into print for you in your own language, with

maps, subway systems and a list of good places to make connection with a glass of cold beer. Armed with this material, you are your own best guide to what you want to see, and when, and for how long, and at what price.

If you do want a guide to lead you by the hand, guides are always available everywhere. So are thousands of European travel agencies, bureaus, information offices, *concierges* and officials who earn a living in the tourist trade and make it their business to look after a traveler wherever he goes, in order that he will speak well of their country and come back again next year. So are more thousands of people in the street who lend a hand to visitors, particularly if they are Americans, because it is good manners to help visitors. You don't buy this kind of traveler's aid, you just soak it up as you go along. It is all on the house. And if you are lost and stuck for a common language to explain your troubles anywhere, there is no better way to tap the free assistance of free Europe than by scratching your head a couple of times on a conspicuous street corner and looking helpless. Somebody will come up, pat you on the shoulder, and say, "Patience, American." After that, relax. You are in good hands.

# 5

## THE VAGABOND, WHEN RICH, IS CALLED A TOURIST

*A discussion of travel costs in Europe today, with primary emphasis on ways to pare the cost of a night's lodging. How to hit the road on less than $45 a month. European hotel classifications analyzed, together with anecdotes showing that de luxe and first-class ratings are a frost. The proper use of hotel guides to get the most for the least. The European* pension, *a wonderful institution for poor boys. European private and public bathrooms. The continental, or coffee-and, or hotel, breakfast. Youth hosteling for young, active skinflints, and methods for boarding this gravy train.*

There is a general misconception in America about how much it costs to live and travel in Europe, comfortably or otherwise.

One authority quotes a flat minimum price of $20 a day for actual living expenses, transportation and purchases extra. Another suggests that $25 to $30 a day will cover all charges except the cost of moving from point to point. A third says that the average daily tab for a "comfortable European trip" is $25 to $50, a pretty wide average in any currency, with transportation charges "incidental." (Why do travel budgets always dismiss travel costs as an "incidental"?) There are other informed guesses at basic minimums, sometimes accompanied by warnings that a traveler must always be careful with his pennies if he wants to live within the prescribed limits because it is possible, in a careless moment, to pay $60 for a hotel suite in Paris, $20 for a dinner, $18 for a bottle of champagne, and so on.

I will knock no chips from the shoulder of any of the authorities. It is possible, although difficult for a man with normal pain reactions, to pay $500 for a European hotel suite without ever going near Paris, and if you are a Champagne Charlie who hopes to spend his evenings shouting "Banco!" at the Aga Khan across *chemin-de-fer* tables, you will need a flock of oil wells to keep you solvent, believe me. This handbook, however, is not written for oil-well owners but for the average man or woman with an average bankroll who wants comfort and a good time at minimum cost.

For them, I kept a day-to-day record of living expenses in Europe for two solid years, covering travels in low-cost, medium-cost, and high-cost areas. Sometimes I traveled alone, sometimes with my wife, sometimes with my wife and daughter. I never laid out more than $40 a day anywhere, and averaged well below that amount, for the three of us, transportation included. In Spain and Austria, still two of the cheapest countries in Europe although not necessarily guaranteed

to remain so forever, we got by comfortably on a family—not individual—tab of from $20 to $25 a day, and by "comfortably" I mean traveling the way we wanted to travel, eating well, drinking well, sleeping in decent beds and going where we felt like going, without worrying too much about whether we could afford a few souvenirs. Even in France, which has maintained its place as the most expensive country in Europe for several years, the daily tab averaged around $35, and that figure includes quantities of gasoline at horrible French prices because we usually traveled by car. None of my mob ever passed up an opportunity to make a dent in the French cuisine, either. Skinflint or no skinflint, I am opposed to penny-pinching when it comes to the eating and drinking departments, and will at no time recommend that any traveler cut down on his groceries to save money. It isn't necessary—*if* you know what you are doing and patronize the right establishments.

Actually, the nearly irreducible minimum average daily cost for European travel today is not $50 or $25 or $20, transportation extra, but the equivalent of $1.40, transportation included. I never got by on this amount myself, have no intention of attempting it voluntarily, and do not feel that many American travelers will choose to make a European tour at this level. Nevertheless, it can be done. A take-off at the low point, to illustrate how it can be done, will lead to other and more luxurious levels.

I met the Dollar-Forty Kid in Bologna. Bologna is the eating town of Italy, with a celebrated local cuisine and plenty of fine restaurants. I had taken Elva and Kendal there for a week so we could try digging our graves with our teeth, as the saying goes, and we were exploring the potentialities of a little joint on a side street that specialized in *zuppa di pesce*. Kendal

struck up a conversation with a *zuppa* customer at the next table. He was a sunburned kid, eighteen or nineteen or twenty, in shorts, and he spoke terrible Italian with a deep-South accent, which fascinated Kendal. After the ice had been broken, we talked about soup and Bologna and Georgia and points in between.

He had spent the summer bicycling through England, Ireland, France, Belgium, Luxembourg, Holland, Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Finland, Germany, Austria, Switzerland and Italy and was on his way to Morocco by way of France, Spain and Portugal to get a job over the winter so he could finance a bicycle tour across North Africa and through the Middle East. He said, "I'm going to have to sell my bike before I get to Morocco, though. I'm running out of money. It's tough, not having money."

I meant to take it out of Kendal's allowance for having spoken to him first, but a fellow-citizen is a fellow-citizen. I said, "Well, if you're really hard up . . ."

"Oh, I wasn't trying to put the bite on you, thanks just the same. I can wire home for money any time I'm really busted. I've been trying to see how far I can stretch $150, and I've stretched it about as far as it will go. The bike is my ace in the hole."

I was professionally curious. A beardless sprout who could stretch $150 to cover the territory he had covered could teach even an expert. I said, "How long have you kept the hundred and fifty alive?"

"A little over three months. It will average out at about a dollar-forty a day before I have to sell the bike. I think I ought to have done it on less, but then I smoke a pipe. Tobacco costs money."

I said, "How true," wondering if he was kidding me. In

Europe you can spend a dollar-forty a day on cigarettes alone, if you aren't careful about what you buy.

He wasn't kidding. His dollar-forty covered not only tobacco, I learned, but camera film, museum charges, small souvenirs, a glass of beer now and then, and a nightly bed and meals at the youth hostels which exist in all of western Europe as well as other parts of the world. I will enlarge on the youth-hostel organization later, for the benefit of young vagabonds. At this point it is only necessary to say that the hostels provide clean dormitory sleeping accommodations for 10 cents or 20 cents or 30 cents a night, and either decent meals for less than a dollar a day all-in, or cooking accommodations. The Dollar-Forty Kid slept under cover every night, bathed and shaved and did his laundry with hot water, had a hot dinner in the evening and coffee-with to begin the day, then scrounged his lunch as he saw fit. Sometimes it was a piece of bread, a tomato and a sausage bought in the market, sometimes *zuppa di pesce* and a glass of red ink at a cheap restaurant. His average daily bill for food and lodging was about a dollar. The excess covered extravagances. His bike not only took him and his pack from place to place, but provided him with a source of extra capital when he went broke. Several thousand like him do it every summer, some with a knowledge of foreign languages to help them, some by waving their arms and pointing to their mouths when they get hungry.

Most travelers in Europe will plan to sleep in accommodations more luxurious than those offered by the youth hostels. The vagabond, when rich, is called a tourist, as somebody once remarked, and tourists in Europe generally put up at hotels. Since the daily hotel bill is a basic charge, racked up against the visitor regularly every morning and not subject to further control once he has signed for his room, it is important

for him to know exactly what he is getting into before he puts his name on any hotel register. The cost level, as well as the comfort, of a European trip can be measured by the type of hotel he regularly patronizes.

Every European hotel, whether it be called hotel, ΧΟΤΕΛ *albergo*, inn, *pension*, *pousada* or guest house, falls into one of four groups. These are de luxe, first class, second class and the leftovers. They are catalogued according to one, two, three or four stars in some hotel guides, A, B, C, and D or D, C, B, and A in others, by arbitrary symbols in still others. The groupings are all the same. Outside of the de luxe, or four-star hostelries, the classifications are largely relative. A "first-class" hotel in a small town might rate "third class" in a large city without changing its accommodations, service standards or prices. As a working rule, *it is a good idea* to patronize the best available hotels in small towns which are not also resorts. These hotels are not expensive and their lower-priced competitors may be flea-bins, relatively speaking.

In large cities and resorts, and wherever else de luxe hotels make a pitch for business, it can generally be assumed that the de luxe classification is a frost, not worth the money a traveler has to pay for a swank mailing address. De luxe hotels provide, for a high price, fine rooms, fine beds, thick carpets, snappy uniforms on the doormen, *sometimes* a beautiful view, and the worst service of any hotel classification as far as the average traveler is concerned. This is partly true because the cushiest hostelries are patronized by celebrities and others who have more money than most people can lay up in a thousand years. These guests spend freely and put out heavier tips than the average traveler can afford, which makes the hired help supercilious about an ordinary tip. Even if an average guest attempts to match the high tipping standards,

which is expensive and a craven's way of attempting to buy the service he is entitled to without bribery, he still won't get it. Important People command more attention than he does. The fact that there may be fifty waiters in full dress clothes standing around a de luxe hotel's dining room occupied only by you, an Armenian millionaire and a beautiful movie star means that half the waiters are watching for the Armenian millionaire to raise his finger, while the other half are waiting for the movie star to drop her gloves. You are out of luck as far as catching a waiter's eye. But you pay, along with the millionaire and the movie star, for the waiters' dress clothes. This is not a fair deal when you would prefer a little attention instead.

You may, at really posh hostelries, even help bear your fellow-guests' share of the bill. Some of the best-known social butterflies in Europe are notorious free-loaders, always at top-drawer levels. When the European press announces that Prince What's-his-name or the Duke and Duchess of Somewhere are stopping off at Biarritz for the summer, it is generally recognized by the gossips that Biarritz is having a bad season. Prince What's-his-name and the Duke and Duchess of Somewhere are known never to have paid a bill in their lives. Biarritz is being papered to attract suckers, of which you are one if you stay at the same hotel with their highnesses. And this is true regardless of what you are willing to pay for the privilege of rubbing elbows with Important People. You just don't get proper service when you are competing for it with big frogs in a small puddle. I am speaking objectively and without prejudice about de luxe hotels because I have been both big frog, by mistake, and little frog, by accident, and know both aspects of the situation.

The big-frog incident occurred in Sweden. Elva and I had

parked Kendal in a boarding school (Swiss boarding schools, in particular among European boarding schools, are reliable, well managed and wholly satisfactory places to leave kids by the day, week or season at fair charges when parents want to go gadding) before we took off, by way of Copenhagen and Stockholm, to see the annual Holmenkollen ski-jumping contest in Oslo. Because the trip by car between Stockholm and Oslo is a two-day run in the wintertime, I asked a travel agent to book a hotel reservation at a town halfway along the road. And because I didn't know that the town was also a resort, I let him make the reservation at the most expensive hotel available.

It was a hotel, as I learned later, that was popular with royalty during the summer. The place was open to commoners when we got there, our toes frozen as stiff as pretzels after a hard day of bucking snowdrifts. Only the frozen toes persuaded us even to try the door. It was obviously one of those joints. The *concierge* wore a hothouse carnation in his buttonhole, and bowed so low when I braced him that he crushed the carnation against his kneecap.

I asked if he had a reservation for me, hoping he would say no.

He said, "But of course! The hotel is yours, sir! Boy! Porter! *Chasseur!* The luggage!"

It made me suspicious right away. Anonymous travelers wearing muddy boots and ice in their whiskers don't get that kind of treatment at de luxe traps. I was even more suspicious when the *concierge* himself, in person, took us up to our room.

The suite he had waiting for us was frightening. It extended through three rooms and a bath the size of the one the Romans built at Herculaneum. Bathroom and all, they were full of tulips, jonquils and daffodils, all labeled "Compliments

of the management." Another compliment of the management was a basket full of grapes, peaches and pears. All the fruit and flowers, including the *concierge's* carnation, had either been grown under glass with violet rays or flown in from North Africa, because otherwise there wasn't a jonquil or a grape obtainable in all of Europe at that time of year.

I was beginning to get really worried. "Compliments of the management" didn't fool me. There was no price tag posted in the suite, but I could guess pretty closely at the charge for royal suites loaded with flowers. When three porters brought up the bags and accepted, without even a twitch of surprise, five *kroner* each, a tremendous overtip which I sacrificed just to get their reaction, I realized what had happened. We had been confused with the other Dodges, the ones with forty-two million dollars.

"We're in for it," I told Elva. "There's nothing to be done. They've trapped us."

"Let's sneak down the fire escape. I feel like an impostor."

"So do I, but I'm not going down any fire escape. We'll eat the free grapes and save a dinner check. We've got a can of sardines and a bottle of akvavit in the bags. If anybody wants to know why we're staying in our room, we have a headache. At least we will have before we get out of here, so it isn't a flat lie."

I was opening the sardines when the phone rang. A cultured voice said, "This is the *maître d'hôtel*, sir. Your table is ready in the dining salon. May I chill the wine now, or shall I continue to wait your pleasure?"

By that time we had had a couple of drams of akvavit and were feeling light-headed. I thought: Oh, what the hell. It happens only once in a lifetime that a *maître d'hôtel* waits on your pleasure instead of the other way around.

I will not go into the details of the dinner that was served to us in the dining room except to say that the *maître* ordered it himself, and four waiters who should have been taking care of the other diners hung around snatching crumbs out of the air under our chins before they hit the tablecloth. What with the akvavit, a bottle of good champagne and several cognacs to follow the coffee, I got to the point where I didn't give a damn what it was all going to cost after the clock struck twelve and our pretty clothes turned to rags. When it was over I gave the *maître* the price of a motorcycle for a tip and told him to take care of the other menials. We went to bed, bowed and scraped out by the whole staff including the chef. We were not vulgar about asking for the dinner check. It could go on the bill. One heavy stroke of the axe is less painful than two light ones.

The treatment was still in effect in the morning. The management had kept a heater going all night in the garage with my car so it would be easy to start. We put on our snow boots and loaded the bags. I threw heavy tips around to everyone, as a man facing the firing squad flips away his last cigarette butt just before they adjust the blindfold, and asked for the bill. Chin up, shoulders square, teeth clenched.

The *concierge* bowed again, crushing a hothouse gardenia this time.

"Compliments of the management, sir," he said smoothly. "There is no bill. We are honored to be your host."

The shock wore off somewhere in Norway, although I never did figure out why, after having been treated like millionaires, we were not charged accordingly. Whatever the reason may have been, I would not stop again at that hotel, or recommend it to a friend, and if this seems like a churlish way to repay such hospitality, I will excuse it by saying that I am writing a tip-

sheet for travelers, not a hotel advertisement. Hotel guests must bear in mind that *somebody* always pays the freight for a free ride. It is rarely the hotel owner. It is usually you, or even me, next time. After they find out the glass slipper doesn't fit.

I concede that we got real service on this occasion. But we received a wholly disproportionate amount of attention from the hotel staff at the expense of the other guests, I had to tip like a maharajah because of it, and I was a VIP, or mistaken for one. Most people aren't VIP's.

The other, and more common, occurrence took place when we crossed trails in France with an ex-king. It was before he became an ex, and still had plenty of money to tootle around the country with instead of having to hole up practically flat broke in a shabby old second-hand palace on Capri. We had stopped in Nantes, where we got rooms at a hotel which was not in the de luxe category but had a good kitchen, as I knew from a previous visit. The king must have known about it too. Between the time Elva and I went out for a constitutional to stir up an appetite before lunch, and the time we got back, the royal entourage had arrived: one king, eleven cars, eleven chauffeurs, a clutch of dancing girls, several of the hardest-looking personal bodyguards I ever want to have scowl at me anywhere, and two *Sûreté Nationale* men on hand to see that all proper homage was rendered visiting royalty according to protocol.

We saw the eleven cars parked outside the hotel, but we didn't catch their significance until we walked into the lobby. I had the bad luck to stumble coming through the door. It is not good business to stumble or make other sudden movements around royal bodyguards, who are all charged up with responsibilities and on the lookout for bomb-throwers. Two of

the gunmen who were in the lobby went for their rods. They didn't pull them out and wave them, but their arm motions and the hard eye they put on me was plenty. I caught my balance, smiling in a friendly way to show them that while I didn't know what was going on, the hotel was all theirs. We would withdraw the way we had come as unobtrusively as possible. About this time, however, Kendal, who had arranged to meet us in the lobby, began to yell faintly from somewhere, "Mamma! Papa! The elevator is stuck! I can't get out!"

In normal circumstances everybody within earshot would have sprung to the rescue. The royal presence inhibited things. The only reaction, except for a look of horror at the sound of a raised voice, was Elva's. She brushed bodyguards aside the way you go through a swinging gate and began beating on the elevator doors and yelling for action to get her daughter out of escrow.

One of the *Sûreté* men said anxiously, "Please, madame! His majesty is having lunch in the dining room! Lower your voice, I implore you!"

"The hell with his majesty," Elva said. "Somebody get this elevator going, quickly!"

Kendal had begun to bawl. Elva banged the doors around like a pair of kettledrums. The *Sûreté* man said firmly, "I must insist, madame . . ."

I really felt sorry for the guy. He was only doing his job. Elva turned on him and said, as loudly as you can say anything without screaming, "*Monsieur*, my daughter is trapped in this elevator. If it is necessary to bring action to release her, I will rip one of these doors out of the wall with my bare hands and wrap it around the king's neck like a shawl. Go find the janitor instead of standing there with your mouth open!"

The *Sûreté* man turned green, backing off. Even the hard-boiled bodyguards shuddered. Elva's threat, or the door banging, started the machinery working, and the elevator came down to the lobby. We mopped Kendal's tears and went somewhere else for lunch because they wouldn't let us into the dining room while the king was there. And although one lunch is usually as good as another in France, it's an imposition to be forced out of your own hotel by anybody, even a king. This is what you can expect when you patronize places where the big frogs go. The higher the bill, the less you will get for it. Of course if you are a big frog yourself, none of the criticism applies.

European first-class hotels are generally not a great deal better for the money than de luxe hotels. I am using "first class" here as hotel guides do, meaning hotels in the three-star, or second-highest, category, one step below de luxe. A *really* first-class hotel is one which provides clean, comfortable accommodations, good service and a pleasant environment for a reasonable charge, which so-called first-class hotels do not always do. But I will continue to use "first class" and "second class" in the guidebook sense. A traveler has to work with a hotel guide if he is going to get his money's worth, and it is useful to know what the hotel guide is trying to say.

"Second class," as used in European hotel guides, frightens too many Americans. It has an unfortunate connotation. It sounds like greasy bathtubs half a mile down the hall, and fly-specked light globes hanging from a cord in the middle of the ceiling. The fact that a second- or even third-class hotel in a big city or resort could qualify as a "first-class" hotel on the road is not immediately apparent. As a result, most American travelers scrupulously avoid "second-class" hotels. Statistics

concerning this aspect of travel are startling. Only a small percentage of American visitors to Europe patronize hotels below the "de luxe" and "first-class" categories.

Travel agents, not all of them, but particularly those in the United States who are unfamiliar with European standards, are partly responsible for this. They send a traveler to places where "all the Americans" go because "all the Americans" naturally want at least "first-class" accommodations if they can't afford "de luxe." And because Americans, by their nature, are less demanding of hotel staffs than Europeans, and willing to pay high prices, by European standards, for modernistic lighting fixtures and a bar where they can get a decent dry *martini*, instead of requiring these and proper service as well, the hotels to which "all the Americans" go are lax in their service, overpriced and overcrowded. They are also avoided by *middle-class* Europeans. A middle-class European is used to getting a lot more for his money than a uniformed boy to push the button in the elevator for him when he is able to push buttons by himself and would rather have the boy running to answer the bell promptly in guest rooms than hanging around the elevator wasting his time at the guest's expense.

A sensible division of hotels below the "*de luxe*" classification in Europe would be one which abandoned the misleading "first class," "second class," and "third class" and divided them instead into two categories: those which provide private bathrooms, and those which do not. This would not necessarily indicate that the food, service and *ambiance* in hotels below the private-bath level are inferior, because some of the most attractive hostelries in Europe are in this category. But most American travelers, particularly on one or two-night stops, want a private bathroom and the comfort and convenience that go with it. The best European guidebooks, and all specific

hotel guides, give a traveler this information about the accommodations in all the hotels which they list, as well as price ranges. As a general rule, and in the absence of a specific recommendation from a *concierge* or some other informed source, the best deal for the money in Europe is provided by the low- and medium-priced hotels in the private-bath classification. Higher-priced hotels in the same group are generally "first class" and therefore not first class at all but tourist traps. Down the line a little, a traveler not only pays less but gets better service, better food, more attention to his wants, and an *ambiance* that has a lot more individuality and charm than can be found in any high-priced European imitation of the Statler. You will not encounter many fellow-Americans in these hotels, and the man who mixes drinks may not know the difference between a dry martini and a glass of sweet vermouth. But you will meet plenty of Europeans who speak English and are happy to introduce you to the pleasure of drinking *calvados*. Any traveler who never tries a snort or two of *calvados* is missing one of the pleasures of a European trip.

The private-bath/non-private bath classification which I have suggested is an arbitrary one based on the assumption that most travelers will pay a little extra for comfort and privacy at tooth-brushing time. There is not much point in attempting to save money by foregoing the convenience of a private bath when one is available. Baths in the community facilities at most European hotels are added on the bill at so much per dunking, whereas one charge for the private facility covers everybody. This is a consideration for travelers in family groups, particularly hot, sticky family groups in which Papa, Mama and all the kids look forward to a comfortable soak at the end of the day.

A notable exception to the general rule must be made for Great Britain and Ireland. I haven't any idea why it is so, unless there is some kind of connection with the Englishman's traditional affection for his tub, but you pay too much for a private bathroom throughout England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales. By European standards, that is; not on the Florida scale. The difference in price between a given double with a door opening directly into an adjoining bathroom, and the same room with access to the same bathroom via the hallway, may amount to as much as a quid or more per couple per day, around $3.00. A quid will buy two good tickets to a London theatre, so cleanliness and convenience should be weighed against other amusements in the British Isles.

The term "private bath," as used in many European hotel guides, sometimes means just what it says, a tub and nothing else. If you expect the incidental fixtures as well, you have to make sure you reach a meeting of the minds about it. In hotels below the private-bath level the accommodations run according to luck. Most hotel guides indicate whether the traveler can expect to find a pitcher of water in an enameled basin, or such relatively civilized comforts as hot and cold running water in the rooms, heat and a *bidet*. *Bidets* are common in European hotel rooms even when there is nothing else in them but a bed, a chair and a cold-water faucet. If you do not know what a *bidet* is for, it can serve as a foot tub, an ice bucket in which to chill champagne, a receptacle in which to soak nylons, or a drinking trough for the dog. Dogs are admitted into most European hotel rooms for a small charge. So is heat, in the wintertime. This rarely happens for free.

In the last few years motels have been built in France, England, Scotland, Austria, Sicily, Denmark, Holland, Switzerland, Belgium and elsewhere. Some, particularly those with at-

tached chauffeur's quarters and television sets, are considerably more expensive than competitive, older and more charming stopovers. In part this is true because present-day building costs are high, whereas in the good old days they were practically nothing at all. Because of this, a number of French chateaux, and several German castles with plumbing laid on according to standards imposed by the government, have been able to open their doors to summer vacationers at prices about the same for full room and board as those charged by some of the spanking new motels merely to put a roof over your head and slip you breakfast. Similarly, the "Logis de France," a chain of about 800 not-too-modern but attractive provincial and resort hotels pledged to provide good food and good accommodations at less than average rates, manage to do so because they don't have to recover the cost of a plant built at today's prices. And old but comfortable hotels on Spain's Costa Brava quote summer rates for full room and board at the seaside which are the same as the tab for one lunch served in the shiny dining room of Madrid's most modern—and most expensive—hostelry. The harsh truth is that modern prices usually go hand in hand with modern construction and fast elevators.

There are exceptions, particularly when funds for the new construction are put up not by private entrepreneurs looking for a quick kill but by governments more concerned with promoting long-haul tourism. Italy has committed itself to an expenditure of $50,000,000 over a ten-year period to develop tourist facilities in its seldom-visited southland, and has already socked at least $100,000 into a pilot development in Sicily which offers seaside accommodations—room, bath, sundeck, telephone, beach, three meals, service charge and tourist tax—at prices not as attractive as was first promised but as low as they can be quoted and still keep the operation solvent.

Conversely, when private funds—most particularly private American funds—go into the construction of European hotels, the hotels too often are of the "de luxe" variety, and while as a general rule all other classes of hotel in Europe have maximum and minimum prices fixed by government regulation, those in the "de luxe" category are allowed to charge whatever the guest will hold still for, right up to the hilt. Far too often they do. This is another good reason for avoiding them.

"Second-class" and "third-class" ratings in European hotel guides do not imply a lack of cleanliness any more than they imply inferior service standards. A belief subscribed to by too many Americans is that the cheaper European hotels are primarily inexpensive because they are dirty, or vice versa. I do not know how to challenge this canard except to say that it isn't so. The comparative cleanliness of any hostelry depends on the attitude of the management toward dirt, and if there is anybody in the world more fiercely fastidious than a middle-class Dutchman or Dane or Scot or Swiss or Frenchman or Italian operating his own little piece of income property, it is the middle-class European guests who patronize his establishment and *demand* cleanliness, or else. It is demonstrably true that standards of hygiene vary from country to country. But they vary in all hotels, not just the inexpensive ones, and the quality of the gold braid on a doorman's hat has nothing to do with cockroaches in the kitchen, if any. They are there or they aren't there, regardless of what you pay at the front desk.

Although European motels are not cheap, some European governments subsidize low-cost, high-quality roadside caravanserai for the motorized traveler, as in Spain and Portugal. Public campgrounds exist in most countries, and there are many wayside inns, *pousadas*, *albergues*, *pensjonater* and simi-

lar small hostelries everywhere, in and away from population centers. Distances are relatively so short that a traveler with an adequate hotel guide can select any class of hotel he wants to patronize by nightfall and have a reservation telephoned ahead, a good idea during the summer rush but unnecessary at other times.

Almost all European hotels, in all classifications, serve breakfast, frequently in the guest's room, and while European breakfasts generally consist of coffee and rolls, nothing more, they can be supplemented as desired. In England, Ireland, Holland and most parts of Scandinavia, breakfasts *are* breakfasts—ham, eggs, cheese and the rest of it. These frequently go along with the room for one flat charge, so a traveler should do his best to cultivate an early-morning appetite and load up with all the free calories available. Particularly in England, where breakfast is often the most enjoyable meal of the day, even when not on the house. I will never forget the circumstances in which I first learned about English breakfasts.

It was in Colchester, on the road to London from Harwich, where Channel ferries dock on arrival from the Hook of Holland. We had been on the continent for more than a year, and had settled into the habit of beginning the day with so-called continental breakfasts, which are coffee and a piece of bread and butter or a *demi-lune*, nothing else. Colchester was our first overnight stop in England. In the morning, when nobody voluntarily brought the customary coffee to our room, I felt kind of grumpy. So grumpy that I was pettish with the desk clerk when we checked out, and suggested that it would be a nice thing for English hotels to serve guests with a dash of breakfast.

He said they did. In the dining room, which was staring me right in the face. This did not make me feel any less grumpy.

But we went in and sat down. A waitress arrived immediately.

"Nah, then, duckies," she said cheerfully. "What will we 'ave this morning? A nice bloater?"

"Coffee," Elva answered, between her teeth. I forgot to say that "grumpy" is not a proper word to apply to my wife before she has had her morning coffee. "Coiled" is more like it.

"Coffee," I said.

"Coffee," the waitress repeated, marking it on her order slip. "A bit of melon first? Then eggs and a rasher of bacon? Or 'am?"

Kendal, who had been running a skilled eye over the menu, said, "I'll have a piece of melon and toast and poached eggs and two pieces of ham and strawberries and a glass of milk and a scone and . . ."

"Coffee," I put in as she paused for breath.

"Coffee," Elva said.

"I 'ave it down," the waitress answered patiently. "What do you want with it, duckies? A nice sausage? Porridge? Real cream this morning. Real marmalade, too. Or 'ow about—"

"Coffee," we said.

She still wouldn't give up. She tempted us with toast, jam, a mutton chop, kippers, fresh strawberries, kidney stew and popovers. I got hungrier and hungrier as she went down the list, but nobody really needs to eat that early in the morning, particularly at English prices. We stuck pig-headedly to coffee, which arrived in time and which we drank in a din of clashing knives and forks while Kendal and the other hotel guests plowed into melon, strawberries with cream, smoking plates of ham, bacon, sausage and eggs, kippers, mutton chops, kidney stew and popovers, toasted buns thickly spread with real marmalade, all the rest of it. It made saliva leak out of the corners of my mouth just to listen to the spadework. But coffee



we had ordered, so coffee we consumed, and coffee I would pay for, as well as the load of carbohydrates Kendal had taken aboard. When I asked the waitress for a check, she said, "Cor, ducky. You're stopping at the 'otel, aren't you? There's nothing to pay."

They call it bed and breakfast. You book it that way, and adjust your eating habits accordingly. Experienced free-loaders can make an English breakfast carry them until tea-time.

After breakfast, it depends on the hotel. Some operate restaurants, some do not. Some with restaurants request that guests eat at least one meal a day on the premises, some make it damn well obligatory by charging a meal on the guest's bill whether he eats it or not. There is nothing anyone can do in the latter case except comply. The food may even be good, although as a rule European hotels which have to plead with or force customers to patronize their restaurants do not offer the best available eats. I will have more to say about hotel restaurants under the heading, "Eating, Drinking and Related Indoor Sports."

After a traveler has stayed for three or four days at many European hotels, and from the first day at all hostelries which cater to the boarding-house trade, he can often avail himself of economical *pension* or *demi-pension* arrangements. By these, a guest contracts to eat either all three meals, or breakfast and one other meal, at the place where he is paying room rent, and since any hotel operator running a *pension* has to have a good cook to stay in business, the *pension* guest is generally in clover. Price ranges are according to locality, variety of menu and *cuisine*, but I have paid as little as a dollar a day for full European *pension*, service and wine included and a

one spot. They hold costs down because the *pension* operator cooks in quantity and can pass the savings on to his guests, as in any boarding house.

Some "third-class" hotels are delightful places; some are lousy in several senses of the word. The "third-class" or "one-star," rating used in European hotel guides indicates only that guest accommodations are relatively primitive, not that the hotel is necessarily dirty or run-down or poorly operated or serves poor food. It may be, in fact, a much more pleasant place for an enjoyable stay than a hotel in the de luxe category. I spent two brief but pleasant winter vacations with my family at a small "third-class" châlet on the slopes of Mont Blanc which, had it been a private lodge, would have qualified as luxurious. The food was magnificent, the skiing good, the view unbelievably beautiful, and big logs roared in an open fireplace at night while guests sat around the fire drinking hot mulled wine served in quantities by attentive waiters. It rated "third class" because it was only a ski lodge. There was one bathroom for each six people, and not always enough hot water to go around. Still, it was a paradise in spite of these drawbacks, and many "third-class" hotels—it would be better to say hotels in the non-private-bath category—are like it. Finding them is largely a matter of luck or a tip-off from someone who has stayed there. But no traveler should let the "third class" frighten him off. If he does he will miss some of the most pleasant small hostelries in Europe.

There is one type of cheap hotel which exists in Scandinavia, Switzerland and the British Isles which is frequently recommended to budget-minded travelers. It is called a "mission"

hotel in Scandinavia, an "*alkohol-frei*" hotel in Switzerland, a "temperance" hotel in England. I got into one once by mistake, in Berne.

It said "*alkohol-frei*" on the door, so I should have known better. But I wasn't really thinking about it, and "*alkohol-frei*" sounded as if it might be similar to fish fry. I thought maybe the house speciality was cooked in a chafing dish, like *fondue*.

With this in mind we patronized the hotel restaurant for lunch, because it looked clean. I ordered a bottle of white wine for Elva and me, a glass of *apfelsaft*, cider, for Kendal. The waitress didn't crack a smile when she took the order. We sat back, anticipating the glow that comes with a good meal and a good bottle of wine. Elva lit a cigarette.

The chill that fell on the dining room would have quick-frozen a side of beef. One guest, who looked like the Reverend Davidson in *Rain* and was apparently about to leave the room, anyway, came by our table, followed by Mrs. Davidson in the flesh. I think he meant to make a kindly gesture and tip us off to where we were, but he lost his nerve at the last minute. He only sighed at the sight of Elva with a fag hanging from one corner of her painted mouth, patted Kendal on the head, said, "God bless you, little one" sadly, and moved along with his tight-lipped wife. This is not the best way to begin any lunch And when my cold, sparkling bottle of wine arrived, I was certain at first that they had served me Kendal's *apfelsaft*. It was sweet pasteurized grape juice. There wasn't even a glass of beer to be had in the establishment, as I found out when I asked. I had to smuggle a bottle of cognac in under my coat to have an *apéritif* out of the tooth-glass before dinner, and I felt sneaky about it for days afterward. "Mission," "*alkohol-frei*" and "temperance" hotels are reasonable in price, sometimes clean, frequently shabby, and all run strictly for the

benefit of guests who live the simple, nonalcoholic and nonnicotinized life. If you are one of these, well and good. Otherwise, avoid them for your own comfort and the comfort of other people who patronize them because they are what they are.

Sleeping under canvas or the stars in Europe cuts costs considerably for those who relish the outdoor life. A friend of mine and his wife, mountain climbers for fun but otherwise rational, bought a second-hand Volkswagen in Germany and toured the Alps from France to Austria for three months one summer at an average cost of less than $12 a day, including gasoline, oil and guides to take them up cliffs hand over hand. This they accomplished for the price by carrying with them sleeping bags, a primus stove and other camping equipment, cooking their own meals and sleeping where they felt like sleeping. Any tourist bureau will supply interested campers with lists of available camp sites, tent communities and similar conveniences for motorized vagabonds.

With smaller packs, and bicycles instead of a car, my friends could have cut costs even more drastically by patronizing the youth hostels, which are available to young people traveling by foot, ski, bicycle or common carrier. Basically, the International Youth Hostel Federation is an organization which encourages travel at the most economical level. By joining the American branch of the Federation (American Youth Hostels, Inc., New York City) for a small fee, a member has made available to him a worldwide chain of clean, adequate, sometimes even fairly luxurious, sleeping and eating or cooking accommodations operated on a non-profit basis. There are hundreds of these all over Europe, about 400 in England, Scotland and Wales alone. They charge very low prices, and cater primarily to individual travelers or parties in the 14-to-25-year

age group, although older travelers are not necessarily barred. All information about the hostels, their location, price range and facilities, is available in an annual handbook put out by the Federation. At a dollar-forty a day, youth hosteling is hard to beat.

But even the Dollar-Forty Kid felt sure that he could have stretched his $150 farther than he did by foregoing a few luxuries, so there is actually no point at which an irreducible minimum cost for European travel can be set. A traveler gets around, in one fashion or another, on whatever he has to spend. Hitchhiking is tolerated in some countries, frowned on in others, but European motorists will give other travelers an occasional lift almost everywhere. Thus transportation charges can be reduced practically to zero for accomplished free-loaders.

However, it has been my own experience that there is frequently too much hike and not enough hitch on European roads, which leads to fallen arches and a general breakdown of the traveler's morale. Americans with a reasonable amount of money to spend will find many means of transportation available in Europe that are much preferable to a monotonous picking up and laying down of shoe leather. My own preference is for a cushioned palanquin borne on the shoulders of four Nubian slaves, but this is difficult to arrange economically. Adequate substitutes for cushioned palanquins are discussed in the next chapter.

# 6

## TRANSPORTATION EXTRA

*Airlines and installment-plans in the travel game, and the nice things they have done for the budget. Streetcars, bikes, kickers, gasoline scooters and other economical means of getting around and about in the European field. The pleasures of travel by private car, and how it may be done most cheaply. How, when and where to buy a European automobile duty-free, with recommended procedures for bringing it home or unloading it for cash on the continent. The excellent and economical European bus systems. Trains, planes and the vessels of European inland waters. Cut-rate night flights in Europe. Comments on European small-boat travel and European subways.*

There are very few sample budgets for a European tour which do not slip at least one cowardly "transportation extra" in

among the solid facts and figures. They all tell you, down to the last penny, what you can expect to pay as a daily average for meals, hotel rooms, guidebooks, souvenirs, even drinks, although it beats me how one man can tell another man whose drinking habits he doesn't know what the second man's bar bill is going to be on a given Saturday night. But when it comes to the actual cost of getting from point to point, it is usually brushed off as "transportation extra." And it is sad but true that no satisfactory escape from this kind of weaseling is possible. There are so many means of transportation available in Europe, so many different methods of getting around at so many different price levels that the cost is largely up to the traveler. He can hike, for free, he can operate a private yacht with a helicopter on the afterdeck, or he can pretty well pick and choose how much he wants to spend in between these two extremes.

And he will find, happily for him in these cruel days of rising prices, that the cost of transportation to, from and around Europe is trending downward rather than the other way. The introduction of installment-plan financing into the trade, its creation of a brand-new mass market of low-income travelers, has had much to do with this. So have the developments of the air age. Concerted action by the airlines, increased operational efficiency and a recognition of the budget limitations of the new class of traveler have brought the minimum cost of a round-trip flight across the North Atlantic down from around a thousand dollars, as it was in 1945, to under $400 today. To meet this kind of competition, steamship lines have put into operation a new type of vessel—examples are the Ryndam, the Maasdam and the Olympia—which, by retaining a vestigial "first class" to permit price differentials, deliver excellent service and accommodations to their huge lists of "second-class"

passengers at less than standard "third-class" prices. Plans have been announced for the construction of two new single-class superliners, to carry 9,000 passengers at a clip across the Atlantic for a fare of about $50 plus whatever the passenger spends in the ship's plentiful cafeterias, night clubs, theatres and such. Europe's good, cheap bus lines are booming. This summer will see the completion of a long-needed streamlining operation by which European railroads will eliminate one whole class of train accommodations and pass resultant savings on to their passengers in the form of better service at realistic prices. The entire European transport system has tumbled to the fact that today's traveler, unlike the wealthy tripper of another era, is on a budget, and wants his money's worth without expensive frou-frou. That is generally what he gets.

Beginning with transportation at the lowest cost-level above zero, bikes are a useful and economical means of getting around the country. They are extremely popular in Europe, much more so than in the United States. Dutch farmers in wooden sabots herd cows on them, although this is difficult to believe until you have watched it, and it is not unusual to see a whole European family, father, mother, the baby and a poodle dog, all balanced on one set of two wheels.

European bicycles usually have hand-operated friction brakes rather than the more effective foot-operated coaster brakes common on American models, but are otherwise much the same, well made and sturdy. New ones, generally, cost about half as much as their American equivalents, and can be readily disposed of on the second-hand market when a tour is done, or exported. No special papers are needed to take a bike across European borders except when going into Austria, where the paperwork is not burdensome, and Spain, which requires a cash deposit. Bikes can be put aboard Euro-

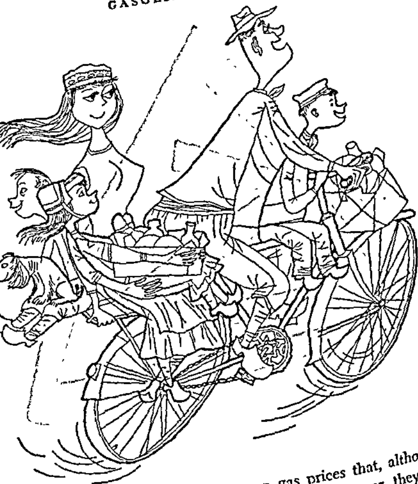
pean buses and trains by passengers of those carriers for a small extra charge when the pedaling becomes too difficult.

Thousands of Europeans go crazy periodically about national and international bike races, which are the dullest things you ever saw for two seconds after waiting four hours for them to come by. In the flat countries of western Europe there are so many bikes on the road and in the street, ridden by men, women and children of all ages, that a pedestrian cannot step off the curb without feeling that he is on his way through a bread slicer. European motorists hate bikes because they are numerous, dangerous and fragile, and the European bicyclist who is knocked on his ear by a passing mudguard will sue everybody within three hundred meters just to be sure of getting the right man. A traveler can cover the British Isles and all of western and northern Europe from Gibraltar to Finland comfortably by bike during the spring, summer and fall seasons, although less rain falls on bicyclists during the summer than at other times. Italy, south of the northern mountains, is also good bicycling country. Northern Italy, Austria, southern Germany and Switzerland are harder on the bicyclist's wind because of the mountains, although road surfaces are excellent and the scenery marvelous. The roads in Yugoslavia are generally ferocious, so bicycling down the Balkan peninsula to Greece and Turkey is not practicable, although I know of one man who did it on a motorcycle. With these qualifications, Europe is a bicyclist's paradise, and there is no better way for an economical exploration of little traveled but lovely European back roads and shady lanes. Distances are so short that a bicyclist need never stretch himself to reach comfortable shelter by nightfall.

Bicycles can be rented, or purchased, with or without gasoline kickers, costing about twice as much as the bike itself,

which will drive bike and cyclist at a good speed on the level or up slight inclines. On steeper grades, the rider has to help out with his feet, although not enough to kill him. These kickers run prodigious distances on a quart of gasoline and are sound investments because they, like bikes, can easily be disposed of second-hand. At a higher price level, currently $200 to $300, there are excellent gasoline scooters, originally manufactured only in Italy but now being duplicated elsewhere, which also turn out wonderful milage. This is a real consideration in view of prevailing European gasoline prices, generally at least twice as high as American prices, often higher. These scooters are more like powered kitchen chairs than motorcycles, require little skill for operation, and will take two people anywhere they can go in a car, and then some. Standard-model motorcycles are also available at a somewhat higher price level, with and without sidecars. Gasoline-powered vehicles, two- or three-wheeled, require the same international papers to cross borders as privately owned automobiles. I will deal further with these documents in a moment.

One of the most economical ways, and certainly the most pleasant way, to tour Europe is by car. It can also be prohibitively expensive if you go about it in the wrong manner. The importation of an American car into Europe may be arranged for a period of as long as 18 months without the payment of duties, but the transatlantic round-trip freight charge for shipping it is $350 and up, mostly up, not counting lighterage and landing charges which spring out and bite you in the differential before you have even touched a tire to dry land. Besides, American cars operate best on high-test fuel, rarely available in Europe, and do not deliver the milage necessary to equalize costs in countries where gasoline is regarded as a luxury item instead of a necessity.



It is enough to say of European gas prices that, although they vary from country to country and year to year, they are generally at least twice as ferocious as American prices and run considerably higher than that in spots. Where normal-sized American automobiles might get 12 to 18 miles out of a gallon, a popular small European model makes 36, so gasoline costs for the family crate may be figured at from two to three times more than those of a small European job over the same distance. After you have paid for getting the family crate

there, of course. Some people ship theirs just the same, but they aren't trying to stretch a bankroll.

Car rentals are easy to arrange in Europe, either in the field or from this end through the AAA, travel agencies, tourist bureaus, even some air carriers that will package a transatlantic round trip, car rental, hotel, meals, and other incidents of a tour at one price. Some foreign-car sales agencies in this country offer the same arrangement. It is fairly easy to figure out from the car-rental contract what the cost will amount to for any given mileage, then apportion it around the party on a per-passenger breakdown and conclude that it is too high, particularly on a short-haul basis. This is true because the nut for documentation, driver's license, insurance and other paper work is charged whether you intend to drive across fourteen countries or just around the block.

While standard car-rental contracts generally permit the renter to take his transport across any border in Europe, and may even allow him to surrender it in a different country than the one in which he got it, these privileges are a factor in the price. A vacationer who considers renting a car for a tour of the Scottish lake country, say, or simply to carry him here and there within any other one country, will do far better for himself by avoiding regular rental agencies, on this side of the Atlantic or the other, in favor of a local garage after he gets there. Because he isn't going to take the car out of the country he needs no particular documentation or expensive extra privileges, and the garageman can often be beaten down to reasonable rates, even a flat price. This is a practical impossibility with rental agencies.

In any event, rentals are not the answer except for relatively brief periods and tours of a single country. Visitors with a month or more to spare, particularly those who travel in

groups, family or otherwise, and plan to cover considerable territory, will see more, enjoy more, find better accommodations and generally get more pleasure out of any European tour at a lower price by investing, temporarily or for export, in a small European car than with any other means of transportation available. And the longer the tour, the greater the advantages to be derived from automobility.

With your own transport, you are your own boss in Europe. You can go anywhere, as free as a bird. Or practically as free, to be strictly accurate. There are a few limitations. The first time we went to Venice, I expected to leave my car on the mainland and take some kind of a boat to the city, probably a gondola with a gondolier who would sing *"O Sole Mio"* while Elva and I stretched languidly on the cushions, dabbling our hands in the water. I knew about gondolas, and that Venice bridged a group of islands in a lagoon, which is as much as anyone knows about it before he gets there. But when we arrived we found a four-lane causeway leading out across the lagoon, with Venice at the tip end, and after we reached the city limits it seemed reasonable to ask a cop the way to the Piazza San Marco.

I had inquired my way to main *piazzas* from hundreds of cops without getting into the trouble this one gave me. He said, "You simply follow the Grand Canal, *signor*."

I said, "Can I follow the Grand Canal in an automobile?"

"You wish to take the automobile to the Piazza San Marco?"

"If possible."

I wasn't really as dumb as someone who knows Venice might believe. I realized that there was a lot of water to the city, but then I could see a lot of solid material as well, and plenty of bridges. That four-lane causeway we had come over was misleading, too. I had an open mind about the whole busi-

ness, and if the cop had been smart enough to explain some of the facts of history, everything would have been clarified then and there. Instead, he rubbed the back of his neck for a minute, shrugged, and went to find his sergeant.

The sergeant said, "May I ask your plans for the car after you arrive with it at the *piazza, signor?*"

I was beginning to suspect that somebody in the crowd was thick-headed. But he had asked a simple question. I gave him a simple answer.

"I'm going to park it and go for a ride with my wife in a gondola rowed by a gondolier who sings '*O Sole Mio.*' If that is possible, of course. Can it be arranged?"

"A gondolier who sings '*O Sole Mio*'? Very probably. If you insist on '*O Sole Mio,*' although personally I would rather drop dead than—"

"The automobile. The *carrozza.* Can I take it to the Piazza San Marco or can I not?"

I think Italian policemen must all have been instructed never to say "no" to American tourists in any circumstances. The sergeant bumbled around for another three or four minutes explaining how an automobile *could* be put aboard a barge and landed near the Doge's Palace, with the *piazza* immediately accessible from that point, when all I wanted to learn, as I finally did by pinning him down, was that there are no streets at all in Venice, only canals and footways, and cars must be parked for the duration of a visit to that city in a garage at the end of the causeway. Automobile license plates have city-identification letters on them in Italy, and I never saw a car with a Venice license afterwards without thinking that it represented a useless waste of working capital which could better be invested in a diving suit so a Venetian could cultivate his own oysters. Outside of Venice, however, there

is nothing which can compare with an automobile as a sound investment for tourists.

The AAA guesses that one out of four Americans traveling in Europe today does part if not all of the trip in a car he has brought, bought or rented. The pros and cons of bringing your own or renting one have already been discussed for the benefit of travelers among the one-in-four who are short, or think they are short, of necessary working capital to buy their transportation outright.' These should know that a dollar goes about twice as far in the European car market as in our own. For a sum ranging from $750 up to $1,500, in dollars (these prices can be shaded considerably by investing in a jalopy, although jalopies are never reliable), an American can buy a good used or factory-new small European car duty-free, drive himself and his family or friends all over Europe on excellent roads at minimum cost for as long as he likes up to a year and a half at a stretch, then either sell the car again for dollars or take it with him when he goes home. There is no way to beat this arrangement for pleasant, low-cost, long-range touring.

Small European cars are a good buy for permanent use. They are well built, carry as many as five passengers, go fast enough to break American speed limits, and squeeze as much as 35 to 40 miles a gallon even from low-octane European gas. A number of different makes are available new in the $1,000-$1,500 price range, several hundred dollars less for last year's model. Prices go up from these levels to whatever you want to spend for custom-built jobs with jeweled headlights about which I know nothing personally except that once one driven by an East Indian maharani with a diamond in her left nostril splashed me with mud. German Volkswagens, French



Citroëns, British Hillmans and Italian Fiats are most popular in the European low-priced field, justifiably so.

If a traveler plans to take one of these cars home instead of selling it when the European tour is finished, it is always cheapest to buy, for export, in the country where the car is manufactured. Americans are permitted to drive such cars, free of taxes and duty, for 90 days in most European countries, and the period can be stretched to a year in England, a year and a half in France. With these two large allowances, and three months each in fifteen or twenty other countries, the car remains tax-free in perpetuity, for practical purposes. Freight charges to ship it home to the U. S. A. range upward from $150 for the lightest models. Duty at the United States end is 10 per cent *ad valorem*, an easy bite, but even this tax can be avoided by a family group pooling its customs exemptions. (More about customs exemptions and similar governmental gifts in a later chapter.) The difference in over-all cost between a good small European car, f.o.b. any United States port, and the price of even the cheapest American car, f.o.b. the same place, is great enough to pay for a large part of an American family's vacation in Europe. Anybody who has ever considered financing a short holiday in the domestic field by combining it with a trip to Detroit to buy a new car should consider the even larger saving to be had through the purchase of a car in Europe. Any foreign-car agency in the United States will supply details.

Travelers who do not choose or cannot afford to bring automobiles back with them from Europe should nevertheless consider the purchase and subsequent resale of a European car if their traveling time in Europe will be at least a month and if there are two or more people in the party. Families of three or four or five who plan to see several countries are pounding

money down a rathole if they travel in any other manner, and this is true even without regard to the fact that travel by car is always the most satisfactory way to see any country.

Cars intended for resale in Europe should be bought in France, because only France permits free disposition of automobiles by foreigners without import licenses. Any car, French or foreign, can be purchased and operated duty-free in France by non-residents for a year, with a six-month extension generally available and all the rest of Europe open for exploration on a single set of documents. To resell for dollars at any time within the free period, it is necessary to find, in France, a resident of the Western Hemisphere with the proper number of dollars, and because most visitors to France from the Western Hemisphere buy cars during the early-summer buying season, and sell them during the late-summer selling season, there will ordinarily be a loss on the sale. This loss, with gas, oil and upkeep, is the "transportation extra" the travel budgets talk about. I would no more try to estimate what it might be in a given case than I would guess at who will be manager of the Brooklyn Dodgers in 1964. But I have traveled with my family by every means of transportation available in Europe and have never done it more economically in the long run, nor more pleasurably, than by car. The larger the family group, or any group, and the more time available for a tour, the greater the saving.

Anybody with a used car worth $1,000 north of the Pyrenees who can figure a way to take it into Spain, where it has a value of $4,000 immediately after crossing the border, and there sell it at the going price without paying at least 100% of the profit over to the Spanish government, needs no help from me. Outside of Spain, the loss on a car sale will vary with make of car, good planning, and season. Anybody who can

buy in late summer, when other tourists are selling, and sell in early summer, when everyone else is buying, will do best for himself. Since cars can be disposed of freely by Americans only in France, French cars are the best investment for resale. They are taxed in the domestic market at rates one-third of those applicable to foreign cars. I once bought a second-hand Citroen, drove it 10,000 miles in a year, and unloaded it at a loss of less than a hundred dollars on a French friend. If he hadn't been a friend, as well as a host who stood me a good dinner while we were talking business, I could have jacked another $30 out of him and cut the loss to about $65, a little more than $5 a month for the car's use. Conversely, I bought another, new, British car as good as the Citroën, drove it about the same distance and had to sell it for several hundred dollars less than I paid for it because there was a glut of that model on the French market. Purchase of any good second-hand car requires a smaller investment and will result in a smaller loss than purchase of a new car. It is a well-known fact, in Europe as in America, that driving a new car once around the block reduces its cash value approximately as much as if the motor had dropped out.

Reputable dealers in the larger French cities, particularly Paris, will take cars on consignment for ultimate dollar sales on commission, and can be relied upon to remit funds when the sale is made. It is harder to cash any car quickly for American money in France than it is in the United States, so no traveler should count on paying his fare home with dollars realized from the sale of an automobile if he leaves himself only forty-eight hours in which to dispose of it. On the other hand, French—not foreign—cars can be sold readily for francs in France, after payment of tax at the lowest level, and since Americans are permitted to spend francs for ship passage

home, as well as to load up with a last-minute wardrobe, this kind of sale should also be considered in circumstances where dollar buyers are scarce.

A desire for dollars among both buyers and sellers of automobiles has led to marked developments in the now crowded field of automobile sale-and-repurchase plans. Today, European automobile manufacturers, as well as many sales agencies here and abroad, will write the same kind of contract. Under any of several plans, a purchaser of a car for European delivery may at his option return it to the seller, when he has finished his tour, at stipulated resale prices, so much after one month's use, so much less after two months' use, and so on. Under at least one such plan the car-user need not even put up the purchase price, but pays the difference between the car's value when he takes it and its value when he returns it. Depreciation is not figured with any great tenderness of thought for the customer, but you get the deal in writing, hard and fast, whereas the advertising for one popular French car which practically guarantees you nine-tenths of your money back on resale in the open market does not constitute an enforceable contract. The repurchase plans, generally speaking, are less expensive than car rentals for travelers who are going to keep the car at least two or three months; the first month's depreciation charge on a repurchase arrangement is rugged, and may exceed the cost of a month's rental. After the first gouging, however, monthly charges taper off nicely.

Installment-plan financing extends itself into new travel packages every day. Rootes Motors, the British firm, and Pan American World Airways offer a package by which a traveler can acquire a round trip to Europe and a car to drive when he gets there, all on time. No repurchase commitments, but the car will be delivered at any of several ports in the U. S. A.

after whatever European tour the buyer chooses to make with it, and if the tour begins and ends in London there is no extra charge for the delivery. Travel agents, as well as the contrivers of the arrangement, can supply further details. The AAA will arrange foreign-car purchases and documentation for all comers, as well as other details of a trip, and American agencies of all foreign-car manufacturers are eager to co-operate with any prospective car buyer. However, contracting to buy a car at this end, even for European delivery, will cut the buyer out of his customs exemption if he brings it home (further information about this later on), and any dealer in Europe will, as an incident to a sale, make all arrangements for licensing and the single set of papers which permits unrestricted motor travel in all of free Europe, as well as a tax-free import to the U. S. A.

As a passing comment, the United States has lately entered into a convention with some, not all, European countries which should further simplify shipment of cars from that side to this. In the meantime, it isn't difficult.

The international documents which are obtainable easily at the time a gasoline-powered vehicle is purchased, whether it be done here or abroad, make crossing European borders a formality. This consists of tearing half a coupon out of a book when the traveler enters a country, surrendering the other half of the coupon when he leaves. That's all, except for compulsory third-party liability insurance in some countries which is advisable in all countries. Insurance rates, by American standards, are low.

The advantages of touring by private car should be obvious to any American. Travelers unable to find rooms at one hotel can always go on to another a few blocks away or, in extreme cases, in the next town. The cheapest and most attractive inns

and restaurants are on the roads. An automobilist can pick up and go when he feels like it, stop where he likes, and explore any side turning that interests him. Highways range from magnificent to adequate throughout the British Isles and on the western continent, from the southern tips of Spain and Italy to the Russian border above the Arctic Circle in Lapland, and from the Atlantic to the Iron Curtain. They are poor but passable in Yugoslavia, good as far as the important main highways go in Greece, and currently being extended and resurfaced at considerable cost in Turkey. The only physical block to motor transport which I ever encountered in all of free Europe was in Thrace, where Greece connects with Turkey at a narrow passage between the devil of the Bulgarian border and the deep blue Aegean Sea. There I found a short stretch, impassable when I tried it during a rainy season, which should be opened to all-year traffic soon. Even if it is not, all of the rest of Europe's network of good highways is there for the automobilist. The international road-sign system in effect in all European countries, easily learned by any dope in ten minutes, minimizes the knowledge of languages necessary for safe driving, and international driving permits good for a year are granted by courtesy to holders of valid American driving permits. Except in England, Ireland and Sweden, where it takes half an hour for the average American to learn to round a blind curve on the left-hand side of the road without his heart in his mouth, driving rules are the same as in the United States, and all European cars, including British makes for export, have standard left-hand drives. Gas rationing no longer exists anywhere in Europe, and although gas prices are high European cars are built to give milage. Gas, oil and breakdown service are generally as available everywhere as they are in the United States. There is, in short, no

means of transport which can equal a small car for comfort, convenience and economy when employed by a couple, a family or a group with more than a few weeks to spend in Europe and an urge to see the other side of the hill.

National touring clubs in some European countries offer foreign motorists discounts on gasoline purchases which are very helpful to the budget. Gas coupons available to visitors in Italy cut pump prices by about a third, and visitors to Belgium and Luxembourg can obtain a cash rebate of tax paid on a limited amount of gasoline purchases by applying for it through the customs office. European gas stations, by and large, do not offer the super-sanitary rest rooms, smiling service and free maps of their American counterparts, but on the other hand there are open telephone boxes along the roads of Switzerland from which any motorist can call help, while keys to similar boxes are given by automobile clubs in other countries to their members, including visitors from overseas. Use of the finest national high-speed turnpike system in Europe, the German *autobahnen*, costs nothing at all, and a temporary membership in a European auto club can more than pay for itself in reduced rates for liability insurance, compulsory in some countries.

Economy-minded travelers who do not have the time or capital to invest in the purchase of a car, bike, motorbike or scooter but who want to cover as much territory as possible should not hesitate to patronize the international bus lines which crisscross most of Europe. European busses are superb, and cost about as much as second-class train fares for the same distance covered. Many of the busses have hostesses aboard, a bar, radio and public-address systems, air-conditioning, washroom and toilet facilities, reclining chairs for comfortable sleeping, a crew of two drivers to spell each other

*en route.* They have all the conveniences of a plane except propellers, and roll to an easy stop when a motor fails instead of having to turn around and hightail it for the nearest landing field on a wing and a prayer. The hostesses all speak English, act as interpreters, attend to border and customs formalities, and sometimes serve tea. Some of the best lines are the Swedish Linjebuss, Netherlands Transbus, Italian C.I.A.T., the international Europabus, and several carriers in the British Isles. They can be utilized either as a cheap and comfortable means of travel from city to city and country to country, or in connection with packaged tours covering transportation, meals and hotel accommodations for one price, with all arrangements made by the bus operators or the travel agent who sells the tickets.

European train systems have done a phenomenal job of self improvement during the last few years. Sharp competition from bus lines and airlines and an ever increasing number of private cars on European roads have forced railroad operators to dig in and compete. I have already mentioned the international streamlining which will convert Europe's railroads to a two-class from a three-class system this summer, with reduction in both first and second class fares and increased efficiency of transportation. It is hard to see how France's rail system, already one of the finest in the world, can improve on trains like the Mistral, which does 200 miles in 152 minutes flat, but the promise is made. Sweden and Switzerland have always had superb rail systems. Germany and Italy have completely overhauled trackage and rolling stock since the end of the war, England has lately earmarked more than three billion dollars for modernization of its railways, and most other European countries are keeping up with the trend. There are still some pretty horrid clinkers on feeder lines in economically re-

riers, including Channel steamers, river boats, Mediterranean cruisers, ferries and most island-hoppers.

Excursion cruises, including tours of navigable European rivers, the Mediterranean, the Baltic or a three-hour ride up and down the Seine in a *bateau mouche*, should be booked in advance. Excursion boats, like transatlantic vessels, take only so many passengers aboard before the gangplank goes up, no deadheads. Other navigable passenger vessels frequently overload to 200 or 300 per cent of theoretical capacity during the summer season, which means you and the next man can always get aboard for the minimum fare and take a chance on finding a seat or a place to sleep afterward. Elva and Kendal and I have bedded down more than once in a triangle on a hatch cover, with Kendal's head on my stomach, my head on Elva's stomach, Elva's head on Kendal's stomach. This is inconvenient when you have a daughter who, like mine, punches her pillow in her sleep whenever it moves, but is not otherwise uncomfortable during a warm summer night if you don't have to take the same beating the following night and no rain squalls come along to slap you in the face. A reasonable payment negotiated with the ship's purser will secure such better accommodations as may be available after you get aboard, although somebody else will very probably have just snapped up the last seat. The gratifying thing about most vessels which carry passengers to Corsica or Sicily or Ireland or the Balearics or Helsinki or Chios or Sardinia is that you can get aboard with the rest of the crowd, summer rush or no summer rush, even though you may have to stand up all the way. This is not true of any other common carrier.

Planes are at the other extreme. A plane passenger always draws a seat, individual attention and comfort. A traveler can fly anywhere in Europe in a matter of hours. It is only fifteen

hundred miles in an air line from the English Channel to the extreme southeast tip of the continent at Istanbul. Other distances are correspondingly short—roughly five hundred miles from Paris to the Czechoslovak border. All of central Europe is within the same radius, which makes possible the use of fast but short-ranged jet planes and an increasing—and welcome—employment of helicopters to preclude those long, miserable, bumpy bus rides from your hotel to an airport that takes twice as long to reach as the city you are theoretically traveling to by plane. Helicopters are either in regular service or about to be put in regular service in and between Belgium, England, France, Luxembourg, the Saar, Germany and Holland, and the whirly-birds can not be too highly recommended to travelers who believe that more of the air transport they pay hard cash for should be transport by air and far less over city cobblestones and muddy country roads. Other recommendations are to investigate the summer night-flights which cost about 25 per cent less than day flights; pick an air line with an established reputation in the transportation field instead of a box-kite flyer who might be cutting fares at the expense of motor overhauls; prepare yourself to see no more of the country you are crossing than what is pictured in a magazine supplied free by the hostess, and memorize the *number*, not the take-off time or destination or name, of your flight, so that when the loudspeaker at the airfield begins to blat, "Passengers on flight number so-and-so scheduled to leave for Berlin at 0930 will please prepare to take their seats on the plane," you will not run around like a worried hen gathering up handbags, coats, cameras, disappearing daughters, wives and other handicaps, only to learn, as I did when we panted at last up to the gate, that it was one of three flights scheduled to leave for Berlin at 0930, and my own plane was still grounded for another hour.

The only European trip which an ordinary traveler must currently make by air if he wants to go at all is the flight to Berlin from Frankfurt or Hamburg. All other points in free Europe are accessible to un-airminded people by other means. However, even the most earthbound traveler will be tempted by the really awe-inspiring free-loading opportunities possible through the facilities of the transatlantic airlines, which not only stand ready to finance your tour but will give you a free ride all over the map.

This happens because, under existing rate schedules maintained by all major lines, a round trip between New York and any European destination costs the same regardless of distances flown or intermediate stopovers, within reason. The New York–Zurich–New York ticket, for instance, is the same price whether you make the round trip without interruption on either leg or explore half of Europe in transit, stopping off at Glasgow, Copenhagen, Düsseldorf, Hamburg, Frankfurt and Geneva, while the New York–Rome–New York ticket carries with it rights to visit friends in London, Paris, Geneva, Nice, Zurich, Milan, Munich, Frankfurt, Hanover, Bremen, Hamburg, Copenhagen, Glasgow and Edinburgh. Since stopover privileges are generally good for a year, there is no hurry about it, either. Some lines will even toss in a bonus sidetrip to another city not on the regular itinerary, and the round trip by air to Europe now can be made to carry with it a free round-trip to Bermuda. I haven't worked out the angle yet, but it seems entirely possible that, by a proper juggling of dates within the one-year stopover period, two vacations might be had for the price of one in this package. Anyway, the "bonus-city" arrangements are very attractive to the vagabond with plenty of time on his hands and no other means of transport. Individual combinations of stopover points can be worked out in advance with a travel agent or airline representative,

and for all this extremely useful service there is no charge.

The airlines are even breaking into the travel agency business themselves. For $500 or less, or a bit more depending on elapsed time and distance covered, you can buy a two- or three-week packaged tour of Europe by air from the flyboys, with hotels, transportation, sightseeing and other costs thrown in. The tour normally begins and ends in New York City, and at those prices is naturally an "off-season" specialty, but it is, by any standard, a buy. New package arrangements of one kind or another are devised every year by airline operators scrabbling for new business in a field where base fares are rigidly uniform among competitors, and only a gimmick of some kind can be used to pull in the trade. With installment-plan financing on hand to offer even further opportunities, travelers can expect transoceanic air operators to come up with an increasing number of schemes to transport, feed, house, and entertain them abroad, all for one price and on easy credit terms. It isn't the most attractive kind of travel, but it is a snap to finance.

It was once possible to take a canoe, a motorboat or a small yacht across Europe on inland waterways, all the way from the English Channel at one end to the Danube and on down through the Balkan countries to the Black Sea, the Sea of Marmara, the Aegean, the Mediterranean and home again. Politics cuts this tour off today, but many Europeans spend the summer months paddling or sailing around free Europe on its oldest this tour off today, but many Europeans spend the summer months paddling or sailing around free Europe on its oldest highways, a network of connected rivers, canals and lakes. It is a popular, economical and pleasant way to see the country—plenty of sun, plenty of exercise, outdoor living at low cost. You can go by small boat from Holland through Belgium and France to the Mediterranean by any of several routes, or sail into Western Germany through the Marne-Rhine canal,

or paddle down the Rhone from Switzerland, or down the Seine from Paris, or up the Thames into the lovely Cotswold country, or all through the beautiful lakes and streams of Austria and Germany, or clear across Sweden from Göteborg to Stockholm, or row around in any of many other areas where boating is easy, fishing easier, and swimming more fun than taking a bath. No more papers are necessary than for any other kind of foot-loose travel, and much less luggage. Travel agencies, national tourist bureaus and European automobile and yacht clubs will supply maps, instructions, latest river information and lists of available camp sites, although a small-boat operator will find comfortable inns and hotels wherever he goes if he does not want to camp. Most of Europe's oldest and most interesting cities are on navigable rivers, and some of its most delightful small towns on accessible headwater streams. Any small-boat enthusiast can, for a nominal investment, enjoy a European tour in this manner, alone or in company with a group.

Transportation within European cities, as distinguished from transportation between cities and from country to country, is adequate everywhere. The big cities—London, Paris, Berlin, Glasgow, Hamburg—have subway systems which are cheap, rapid, extensive and considerably less smelly underground than some of their American counterparts. Subway-system maps are available which show a traveler how to tunnel his way about at low cost. Surface streetcars are still in evidence, but they are mainly prewar rattletraps and are fast being replaced almost everywhere with modern trolley-buses. Taxis are considerably cheaper everywhere in Europe than in the United States.

One complication about many European taxis is that a traveler who uses one in a strange city must sometimes submit

to what seems to be a bold, barefaced and extortionate overcharge, or else get into brawls with taxi drivers and maybe end up in the hospital paying doctor bills which are not on the budget. This happens because European taximeters are frequently out of date but kept in service just the same, like an obsolete calendar with Marilyn Monroe's picture on it. Day-to-day adjustment in the buying power of European currencies is no longer a factor in the purchase of hack rides, but the charge on a taximeter may have to be supplemented, depending on how long it has been since the meter was manufactured or reset, by a flat amount, by a percentage, by a multiplication, or restated at arbitrary values shown on a printed conversion table. It is impossible to forewarn or be forewarned of actual adjustments currently necessary in certain European cities, and the rules change so quickly that by the time you have learned, after half a dozen fights with half a dozen cabbies, that the cabbies are not clipping you when they demand four times what the meter says, the fare has gone up to six times the meter charge and you are fighting them all over again. Most European hack drivers with maladjusted meters will produce, upon demand, a tariff card showing proper fare adjustments, but the fact that they don't have such a card does not necessarily mean they are not authorized to collect more than the meter reading. A sensible traveler with no better than average punch in either hand should hold still at least once in each city for apparently exorbitant overcharges by taxi drivers. While it may be a genuine clip, it is much more often strictly in order. Ask a cop or the doorman about the regulations before putting up your fists. If there is no meter on the hack, you are a chump if you don't ask what the rates are before climbing aboard.

Fiacres, horse-drawn buggies with [illegible] an be rented cheaply in many Euro ean cities [illegible] ant for a

leisurely sightseeing tour or ride through the park, in spite of the horsy odors. Watery towns like Amsterdam, Bruges and Venice provide small-boat service by the trip, hour or day, and the standard rubberneck bus tour with a barker to discuss the sights—all European barkers bark in English—is a good way to give at least a preliminary once-over to any city. It never hurts to negotiate the price of any of these tours in advance, as in the case of unmetered hacks.

Automobilists attempting to explore any large, strange European city in their own cars will find it pays dividends to hire, by the hour or day, a driver who knows his way around and can speak an understandable language. Tourist bureaus and travel agencies will dig up one of these at a fee which is little to pay for a comfortable round of the sights instead of a nerve-straining battle with one-way streets running in the wrong directions, warning signs which scream "*Einfahrt Verboten!*" at you, and strange local traffic regulations.

Elva tried to do a rubberneck tour of Zagreb, not a particularly congested metropolis, as her own chauffeur. I would have known better, but I was busy with something else and told her I would see her at lunchtime. She was whistled down at the first corner she came to by a cop who spoke Serbo-Croat and took ten minutes to explain, by signs, that motorists are required to beep the horn at corners. Elva beeped the horn good at the next corner and was whistled at by a second cop.

She thinks she was lectured in Slovene that time, although she isn't sure of the language. It took another fifteen minutes before she got the idea that you beeped once to go straight through, twice for a turn. She beeped twice at the next corner, making a sweeping left-hand turn with the appropriate arm signal. A third cop flagged her to the curb.

"I got more whistles in three blocks than Miss America

would draw in Buenos Aires," Elva told me later, when I asked why she was late for lunch. "The next policeman spoke Macedonian, I think. He was patient, though. He got out a pencil and drew me a chart—one beep for straight ahead, two beeps for right-hand turns, three beeps for left-hand turns. I'd had enough sightseeing by then, so I decided to turn around and come back to the hotel. But I still didn't know what noises to make for a U-turn, and I couldn't find any passable side streets. I had to drive to the city limits to turn around. It took me an hour to get back."

"It shouldn't take an hour to drive to the city limits and back. I've been sitting here starving for—"

"I lost twenty minutes wondering what to do about a red warning sign in the middle of the road. What would *you* do if you had just been lectured by three different policemen in three different languages and came to a warning sign that screamed *"Pazi Na Vlak!!!"* at you? Answer me that before you crab any more about your lunch."

We both had some further difficulty before we learned that *Pazi Na Vlak!!!* means "Train Coming," so even motoring has its drawbacks. It is still the most enjoyable and economical way for family groups to see Europe extensively. The traveler with his own bike or gasoline scooter or canoe is only slightly less limited in his freedom to go where he wants to go and see what he wants to se[illegible] he feels lik[illegible] nearly

which scares the whey out of at least one traveler and should be religiously avoided by anybody who is, as I am, afraid to look down from anything higher than a stepladder.

This is the *téléférique*, which is nothing more or less than a cage strung on a wire stretching usually from the safety of level ground to the dizzy top of a high mountain, with a second wire to pull the cage up and down provided that the first, or supporting, wire doesn't break. I have ridden on these hellish yo-yo's practically everywhere they can be found, from Rio de Janeiro to the Swiss Alps, and each time I not only swear it will be my last trip but am convinced that it really will be. Unlike planes, which float, and elevators, which travel in a small but tolerable world of their own, the *téléférique* strains upward at the end of its string surrounded by miles and miles of thin air, nothing below it but jagged boulders, while the inexorable law of gravity makes itself felt in creaks, groans and a gradual diminution of climbing speed as the angle of the supporting cable grows steeper, so that you are certain you will never make it long before you get there. Even when you arrive, covered with beads of cold sweat, your knees are too weak to carry you gracefully to safety, and you still have the return trip to think about. It does not help to have a daughter along who is too ignorant of elementary physics to be sensibly scared, and either jumps up and down to make the cage rock, or puts her eye to a crack in the floor and says, "Hey, look! You can see two miles straight down!"

Cog-wheel railways, funiculars and other climbing apparatuses which skirt chasms to see how close they can go without falling in are bad enough, but the *téléférique* is by far the most damnable of all. An otherwise whole-hearted recommendation of the entire European transportation system must be qualified in this respect.

# 7

## EATING, DRINKING AND RELATED INDOOR SPORTS

*European cuisines discussed, with heart-felt appreciation. How to distinguish a good expensive restaurant from a good inexpensive restaurant at a glance. Side streets, railroad stations, roadside joints and other places where good food at reasonable prices lurks in the neighborhood. Bierstubes, pubs,* tabernas *and* fado *restaurants as economical and attractive chowhouses. Wine, beer, spirits, and how to consume the very best varieties at the lowest possible prices. A few European restrictions on boozing, with methods for circumventing them. Tea, coffee, milk, soft drinks, and $H_2O$; their safety, quality and availability in the European field.*

Good eating is slowly losing ground in Europe to the parking meter and the high cost of goose liver. It takes time as well as money to qualify as a gourmet, and more and more travelers in Europe have less time and lower budgets annually. But in spite of the trend toward the quick lunch, many Europeans regard the feeding operation as an art, to be performed in the proper surroundings and with attention to atmosphere.

It was my pleasure once to attend a farewell dinner given for a Rumanian diplomat in a Magyar restaurant in Vienna. The name of the guest of honor is not important, but I remember that a girl who was sitting on his lap part of the evening called him Pinky. He was later liquidated as an enemy of the state he represented.

Pinky had been stationed in Vienna for several years. He was about to leave for Bucharest and, as it turned out, the chopping block. Because Austrians are a great people for putting on the nosebag whenever an excuse exists, his Viennese Communist friends arranged a party. And because Vienna is a lovely city in which to pass time on an expense account and with diplomatic immunity, whereas Bucharest, according to all reports, is a sinkhole even without chopping blocks to worry you, Pinky's enthusiasm about returning from exile to his native land was tinged with more than faint regret. His feeling made itself felt at the festive board.

There was a lot of wonderful food, a lot of toasting done in wine and a liquor that tasted like orange brandy thinned with alcohol. The lights were low, mostly candles, and a string quartet played wailing, melancholy tunes all through dinner. An hour of that heart-rending gypsy music would make a brass andiron weep even in normal circumstances, without orange brandy to help. Most of the guests were sniffling and

mopping their eyes even before Pinky dumped the girl off his lap and stood up to make a speech.

"Comrades," he began. The gypsy violinists, playing soft background music, hit a chord that broke the last of his resistance. Tears began to leak out of his eyes and roll down his cheeks into his beard.

"Comrades," he said again, choking back a sob. "You must all envy me tonight. I have been rewarded with an appointment in the people's democracy. Tonight I see the last of this decadent, pluto-democratic neo-fascist outpost of a dying capitalistic society. Tomorrow will find me in Bucharest"—he couldn't choke the sob that welled up at this point—"in the forefront of the fight for a better world, shoulder to shoulder with ranks of the happy masses, one Spartan soldier among untold thousands in the battle for freedom. No more will my position require me to degrade myself in the eyes of corrupt and cynical warmongers by pretending an enthusiasm for a way of life which is hateful in essence, a life of tinsel glitter and inequality, in which the few are borne on the straining backs of the many, and the mere possession of unearned wealth justifies extravagant expenditures on just such wasteful, imperialistic manifestations of social parasitism as the magnificent dinner you have so kindly arranged for me tonight."

He mopped his eyes and made a sweeping gesture with his glass, sloshing orange brandy in the faces of several of the other guests. Their faces were already wet, with tears, so it didn't matter.

One of them groaned, "How happy you must be, comrade. No more capitalist poison like orange brandy."

"Or *palatschinken mit ribisel*," another wept.

"Or *schlagobers*," a third blubbered.

"Or May wine at the *heuriger* houses in Grinzing."

"Or the opera."

"Or concerts in the Kammersaal."

"Or horseback rides through the Wienerwald on a summer afternoon."

"Or cabarets."

It went like that around the table, each sobbing guest thinking of some other reason why Pinky was lucky to be shaking the dust of Vienna off his feet, while the gypsies pulled long-drawn, heartbreaking minors out of the violin strings. By the time it was Pinky's turn to talk again, he had his head buried in his arms and what was left of an excellent dessert. All he could do was mumble tearfully, "I'm so happy! I'm so happy!"

This is an example of the type of gay atmosphere which is appropriate to the enjoyment of a good, leisurely dinner. Europeans spend more time on eating than Americans, and a relatively larger proportion of their incomes on food. It does not mean that American visitors must necessarily load their budgets lopsided in favor of the pantry department, because by patronizing the right kind of eating houses a traveler can dine more cheaply and on much better cooking in most parts of Europe than he can in the United States. It is my own feeling, however, that penny-pinching is not an end in itself but only a means of procuring funds which can better be expended on personal nourishment than for anything else. If the function of money is to buy that which gives the most solid pleasure to the purchaser for a given amount, then Europe should be approached as if it were one big dining table, where food and liquid refreshments are of primary importance and the furniture, fittings and ornamentation, however lovely, only secondary.

To dyspeptics contemplating a continental tour, I will only say that I hope they do not suffer as much as I did on the occasion when, by skillful planning, I arrived at St. Malo on the coast of Brittany during the first day of the oyster season, and spent twenty-four tortured hours watching my wife and daughter stuff themselves with barrels of bivalves, tunnel out of sight into mounds of fresh lobster and cracked crab, make beasts of themselves over *sole meunière,* paddle through pools of mussels *bordelaise,* and suck last lingering drops of melted butter and garlic out of *escargot* shells while I sipped some kind of pale thin broth because I had a temporarily upset stomach. I made up for the broth later, in twenty-three different countries, but the memory of St. Malo still lingers.

There are four basic *cuisines* in Europe. These are the French, Italian, German and Turkish. Many regional specialties exist as well, from the *gazpacho* of Andalusia to the *smörgåsbord* of Sweden. A good trencherman can enjoy gull's eggs in Ireland, *wienerschnitzel* in Austria, roast beef and Yorkshire pudding in England (if he is lucky), even East Indian *rijstaffel* at The Hague and good Cantonese cooking in Berlin. But none of these qualifies as a real European *cuisine,* because there is more to a *cuisine* than one or two or a dozen dishes. Cooking is a matter of sauce, flavoring, know-how and love. The French, in my opinion, backed by the opinion of several million other qualified eaters, are head and shoulders above the rest of the world in the art of preparing food for human consumption. For that reason France is the most attractive country to the eating man, whether he be *gourmet, gourmand* or an ordinary guy with a good appetite.

One of the genuine pleasures of any European tour is a round of the best French restaurants. There is no such thing

as a poor restaurant in France, except very briefly. Poor French restaurants stay open a few days before folding up for lack of business. Those that survive can be classified as good, excellent, magnificent and incomparable. The French *Guide Michelin*, which has been mentioned elsewhere, groups them according to no-star, one-star, two-star and three-star ratings, and in spite of some differences of opinion among the experts about the editors' judgment in rating a good *cuisine* down because it is served in a palpable tourist trap, the *Guide* is generally conceded to be objective, unbribable and reliable. A typical annual revision will list a dozen three-star, four or five times as many two-star, several hundred one-star, and several thousand unstarred restaurants throughout the country; not all the good restaurants in France (there are 8,000 eating houses in Paris alone) but enough to keep a *Guide* reader exceptionally well informed at chow time wherever he may be. The selections are rerated upward or downward as appears appropriate in the following year's edition, and new commendable kitchens added to the list with a cautionary note that the *Guide* does not claim to list "all the establishments providing outstanding cuisine." I, for one, hope it never does. I have been checking its ratings personally for several years, and my liver is on its last legs.

There are other restaurant guides, in France as elsewhere in Europe. None is quite comparable to the *Guide Michelin*, which provides concise information about price ranges, cooks' *spécialités*, good local wines, cellars with better than ordinary vintages, and a map of each city or town showing a traveler how to find the place before he drools to death thinking about *truite aux amandes, poulet au kirsch* and *vacherin aux marrons*. With the *Guide Michelin* under his arm, a traveler is well armed everywhere in France, and knows not only what

he may expect to have set before him in the way of food and drink but about what the tab will be when pay-off time arrives. He can pick and choose among restaurants accordingly. Elsewhere in Europe, or in France itself if he does not invest the paltry two or three dollars which is the price of a *Guide*, he will either (a) eat and drink where and as he likes, the hell with what it costs, or (b) observe certain standard principles hereinafter discussed which will reward him with good food at minimum prices.

In the high-cost countries particularly, unless he elects voluntarily to forgo good food for other delights, a traveler must learn to distinguish between *chichi* joints and good kitchens. He should remember that a restaurant which has established a reputation for cooking sometimes tends to fancy up the fixtures and branch out with a floor show to attract more business. As the management devotes more and more attention to perfecting a good cancan line, the cost of which goes on the dinner check, its cooking standards frequently suffer. It does not matter one jot or tittle that a 1906 Baedeker, or even last year's guidebook, says the joint once served the finest food in Europe if your soup is cold when you get it because the waiter has trouble bringing it through the interference of a line of chorus cuties, however enjoyable these may be to the eye. The best European restaurants serve food and liquid refreshments, nothing more, with the possible exception of a touch of gentle music in the higher-class places.

And they serve it simply, with no more than minimum flourishes between the kitchen and the guest's tastebuds. Beef brought into the dining room impaled on a flaming sword looks nice, but it dribbles a lot of juice on the carpet which would fit better on the diner's palate. I once had an otherwise good dinner ruined for me because the table waiter wouldn't

serve hot food which grew cold on a sideboard while we waited for the *maître d'hôtel* to add a finishing touch to the meal by preparing, in a chafing dish, an exotic addition. He rolled up his starched cuffs, cleaned his hands on a wet towel held by a flunkey, lighted the alcohol flame, melted butter in the chafing dish, fiddled around with salt, pepper and paprika, hovered breathlessly over the cooking like Brillat-Savarin watching a sauce, and finally slid the damn thing out on a cold plate with a triumphant "*Ecco!*" It was a fried egg.

The finest restaurants in the high-cost countries are not the most expensive, luckily. I have eaten regularly and with humble appreciation at a second-story walk-up in Paris which is one of a handful of restaurants in France currently three-starred by the *Guide Michelin*, another way of saying that it is probably one of the twenty-five finest eating houses in the whole world. A normal dinner check there runs around $6, wine, *couvert* and service included. This amount, while more than I would pay ordinarily for a dinner consisting of nothing but *gratin de langoustines Georgette, entrecôte sauce béarnaise, pommes frites, salade verte de saison*, black coffee, a piece of Roquefort and a bottle of good wine, is still only small change in a place where the chef opens his own veins to provide blood for a sauce. Three blocks away there is a fancy and well-advertised place which serves a somewhat more elaborate meal at three times the price, the food well prepared because it is, after all, a Paris restaurant, but not good enough against the competition to rate a star in *Michelin*, and with too many flourishes of the hot meat.

Another four blocks up the boulevard an obscure two-star restaurant specializes in Alsatian cookery. There eaters can stuff on wonderful spicy plates of sauerkraut, sausages, ham and smoked beef as a mere beginning to an enormous and

magnificent meal, wash it all down with a bottle of chilled Sylvaner, take a cognac with their coffee, and stagger out afterwards, bulging, at $2.50 a head, all extras included. Beyond the Alsatian joint, *on a side street, there is a working-man's restaurant, not listed in any guide, which serves a well-*prepared dinner of soup, salad, steak, potatoes, vegetables, bread, a carafe of wine and a piece of cheese for less than $1.50. All this in the capital city of France, which is an expensive country in which to eat.

Because Europeans, particularly those with low incomes, do not lay out hard-earned money for indifferent cooking, a traveler can eat well and at reasonable cost in small, unadvertised side-street restaurants which would be nothing but grease traps in the U. S. A. This type of restaurant should be patronized by low-budget travelers as a general practice. There are, of course, exceptions to the rule. It is a sin against nature and the memory of Escoffier not to eat at least one meal, whatever it costs, at a restaurant which has an established international reputation for fine cooking and a good cellar when the traveler finds himself in its neighborhood, and in low-cost countries like Spain and Austria it is a pleasure to pick up the check. England is not cheap, but visitors to that country may find it necessary to search out restaurants which offer foreign *cuisines* at relatively high prices. English cookery, to put it as kindly as possible, is terrible except for the breakfasts.

Outside of these countries, even within them, a traveler will get the best available native cooking at the best prices in small restaurants patronized by medium-income working people who are themselves stretching a budget and know enough to go to places where good food is served at a decent price.

Since there are not many adequate, impartial and up-to-



date European restaurant guides, the traveler in a strange town will have to rely on information at source, which is always the best anyway. You can ask any *concierge* where he would eat on his day off, and give the place a try regardless of the fact that the *concierge* will tell you it isn't popular with tourists. That is what keeps the price down. The food will be good or the *concierge* wouldn't go there. Without help from anybody, a traveler can find good restaurants by looking for them on side streets slightly off the main stem, or in the vicinity of the *gare* or *bahnhof* or *estación del ferrocarril* or railway station or whatever the place is called where the trains come in. Middle-income Europeans travel mostly by train, and middle-income restaurants are placed accordingly. The *buffets*, actually restaurants, in many European railway stations are excellent and inexpensive, to such an extent that restaurant guides list them individually with other recommended chophouses. On the road, it is well to remember that in Europe, as in the United States, truck drivers regularly traveling any highway patronize only those eating houses which serve good meals at a fair price. These can always be identified by the trucks that stack up in front of them around mealtimes, and are frequently surprisingly attractive both as to price and surroundings. European roadside inns are a far cry from the ptomaine parlors which line U. S. 20 and other major American roads, poisoning honest travelers with buzzardburgers and weak coffee.

European low- and medium-priced restaurants, as well as some high-priced eateries, post the day's bill of fare and price list in the window or near the door so a prospective client can see what he is walking into. A quick glance at the listed *couvert* and service charges will tell an eater what he wants to know even if he can't distinguish an *imam bayildi* from

Southern fried chicken and therefore doesn't know what a fair price for it should be. An increasing number of European restaurants are adopting the commendable practice of including the *couvert* and service charges in meal prices as quoted, but many still add them on separately. If these standard bites, as shown on the posted bill of fare, are reasonable in amount, the rest of the check will be reasonable. And vice versa.

The *prix fixe*, an entire meal served for one price, is the European equivalent of the blue-plate dinner, except that the European kind is generally more tasty and there is more to it; soup or *hors d'oeuvre*, entrée, meat, potatoes, vegetables and dessert. In countries where French is understood—and French is still the common international language everywhere when it comes to restaurant bills of fare—the fixed-price meal is frequently known as the *"menu."* It will be served without further argument if you ask for it by name. A diner who orders *à la carte* would logically ask for *"la carte,"* the bill of fare, and not mention *"menu"* at all. He can then point out to the waiter what he thinks he will like on the list even when he hasn't the faintest idea what he is ordering. In this way he will encounter snails, squid, sea urchins, pickled raw eel, raw hamburger mixed with egg yolk and capers, and similar pleasant taste sensations, all better than they sound in cold print.

Fixed-price dinners are standard in low-priced restaurants, and the most economical of all full meals. There is usually a catch, however, in the extras. European restaurants do not serve butter as a matter of course, except for breakfast, so butter is a separate charge. Ditto coffee. Heavy coffee drinkers will suffer in countries, like Germany, where the roasted beans cost $3 or $4 a pound in the market place. Milk, tea and other beverages are extra, even wine unless the fixed

price specifically includes wine. Ditto everything else that isn't listed on the "*menu*," as well as the *couvert*, service and such taxes as may be applicable. A traveler who orders a normal European standard-price dinner with extras like butter, coffee and a more elaborate dessert than that offered on the ticket may expect to pay from 25 to 50 per cent more than the fixed charge before he gets his hat back. In the high-cost countries, "*menus*" should be figured accordingly. In low-cost countries, you can afford to let yourself go without restraint. Good food is so cheap you wouldn't believe it.

I once took Elva and a couple of guests to dinner at an inn on the Costa Brava, which is part of the Spanish seacoast between Barcelona and the French border. I remember the evening for two reasons. One was because our dinner guests were our hosts for the night. Circumstances made it necessary for me to try to sleep in a hammock slung next to a Spanish grandfather's clock which struck, at ragged and unpredictable intervals, 6 and 11 and 27 and 14 o'clock all night long, without rhyme, reason, chronological consistency or any motive at all except to drive people crazy. Because I was unable to get the damn thing open and stuff a shoe into the works, I was, by dawn, twitching so badly that I missed a free swing at my host after I had complained about the clock and he said, "Oh, that thing. Amusing, isn't it?" The other reason was the check I paid for four excellent dinners at the village *comedor*, including wine, coffee, brandy and service. It came to the equivalent of $3.33. Not each, but for all.

In France, where eating has traditionally been a formal exercise, and Spain, where a whopping meal is usually served around 2 or 3 P.M. and dinner rarely begins before 9, more often later, it has always been difficult for Americans to find a quick snack or feed the kids at the hours they are used to

taking on light nourishment. This difficulty is becoming a thing of the past with the appearance of an increasing number of snack bars in the two countries. If you *do* insist on hamburger, chili beans and chocolate malted milkshakes in Paris or Madrid, you can get them or reasonable facsimiles thereof in these and other large French and Spanish cities. The snack bars are generally modern and clean, also serve good food of the country, do not tack a charge for *couvert* or service on top of food prices, and are deplored by old-school eaters as a ruination of national eating habits. They are very, very popular.

Regional specialties should always be given a try, in all countries. One man's fish is another man's *poisson,* as the old saw goes, and I for one was never able to develop much enthusiasm for *tripes à la mode Caen,* a famous delicacy. Still, it is remarkable how good things like snails taste when you get used to the idea. The first time I ever ate snails, they were prepared by a cook named Germaine who worked for us in France. She was deaf, nearly blind, clumsy, and could do things to a piece of meat nobody would believe until he had tasted it himself. She bought three dozen live *escargots* in the market and kept them for a week, for reasons I never really understood, in a wire basket from which they regularly escaped and streaked for freedom at a roaring foot and a half per hour. By "streaked" I am referring to the gummy trails they left on walls, tables and floor before Germaine ran them down, peering near-sightedly into the corners and muttering, "*Bêtes! Bêtes!* Come back before I step on you! Think of all the nice butter and garlic!"

I stepped on one myself, barefoot, and what with the impression the experience made on me, as well as the trails of slime around the kitchen, I had had all I wanted of snails

long before they came sizzling to the table. I ate one to keep from hurting Germaine's feelings, a second because the first one didn't gag me as much as I had expected, a third because the second one tasted pretty good at that, and the rest of my share of the total because they were delicious. Later I handled as many as two dozen and a half at a sitting. Nobody will ever learn about *escargots* if he hasn't the gumption to try them at least once.

The French *cuisine* is standard in France, Belgium and parts of Switzerland and Luxembourg. It influences all European cooking to some extent. After France, Italy is another eater's paradise. Food is cheaper in Italy than in France, and almost as good, so travelers can safely patronize small inexpensive Italian restaurants as they would small inexpensive French restaurants. The popular Italian *caffè espresso* houses, coffee stalls, are fine places to buy excellent freshly made coffee and sandwiches or a bun for breakfast or a quick snack for the small fry, as in the snack bars of France and Spain. *Bierstubes* and *weinstubes* in Germany, Austria and Switzerland are also fine places to eat cheaply if the traveler will be satisfied with a limited selection of good food, plenty of beer and black bread, and a *gemutlich* atmosphere, with the customers sitting around reading newspapers and playing chess between tankards. Otherwise, regular German, German-Swiss and Austrian restaurants serve huge, excellent meals at prices which are relatively high in Switzerland, intermediate in Germany, and lowest in Austria, which still proudly quotes rates "established on July 15, 1951" for full daily *pension*.

The Turkish cuisine, *kebabs* of various kinds, yogurt, *shashlik*, *pilaf* and the rest, all good, extends through Turkey, Greece and up into Yugoslavia, intermixed with German and French cooking. The Greek *tabernas*, which are much like

German *weinstubes*, are worth patronizing, for local food as well as local color. It is the custom, in Greece, for eaters to wander out into the kitchen and take a look at what is simmering on the stove before ordering. In Yugoslavia this can be done, too, and in both of these countries it is easier to guess at what you are ordering by peering into the pot than by figuring out what a *carte* printed in Greek or Cyrillic is trying to tell you. Even if you can read Greek and Cyrillic, the cook is flattered by your call.

English pubs are entertaining places to eat, like Greek *tabernas*. The food isn't anything a Frenchman would go oh-la-la about, but it is cheap, there is plenty of beer and ale available to go with it, and the eater can entertain himself puzzling out the difference between public bars, private bars, saloon bars and a few other categories, all in the same establishment, all charging different prices for the same drinks, and all open to the public. I have not yet solved the English pubs, although I enjoy them. In Portugal, there are many good medium-cost restaurants where *fado* singing is a specialty of the house. The waiters alternate between trundling victuals and moaning native torch songs. In spite of a general rule that the best European chowhouses specialize in food to the exclusion of entertainment, most Portuguese *fado* joints are high-class eateries, and entertaining as well.

Ireland, Holland and Denmark do not have distinctive *cuisines* of their own, but produce plenty of butter, eggs, milk, cheese, fish, beef, ham and so on. Real cooking styles do not develop in countries like these, although a solid and well-prepared meal is always available cheaply where the necessary ingredients are on hand in quantity. There is no great need to pinch pennies in these countries. Particularly Ireland. Furthermore, since they are all close to England, a visitor on

his way through any of them to England can pack a basket and enjoy the taste of an Irish, Dutch or Danish picnic among the beauties of an English countryside.

The enjoyable economies of the basket lunch should not be overlooked in any country, regardless of the quality of that country's cuisine. One of the truly enormous cash advantages accruing to a family group traveling in its own car is the opportunity it gives the old man to promote a daily picnic by the roadside, with Junior doing most of the basket-toting and the savings in food costs something really pleasant to think about. In good weather, it is cheap, it is fun, it is no trouble. Sandwich preparation is not necessary; every European town has a marketplace where the traveler can buy a loaf of bread, butter, sausage, cheese, tomatoes, fruit, wine or beer, and milk for the kids. With salt, a knife and paper napkins in the glove compartment at all times, all Pop has to do is look for a nice place to pull up.

Swedish, Finnish and Norwegian specialties are good, running heavily to fish and fats because of the cold climate. *Smørrebrød* and *smörgåsbord* flank the visitor on all sides, although it is almost impossible to get a green vegetable anywhere in Scandinavia. Because Norway is not a food-producing nation, food is more expensive there than in other Scandinavian countries. You can, however, eat reindeer meat and ptarmigan in Norway, almost enough to justify Norwegian cost levels.

Spain and Portugal, rumor notwithstanding, have never developed native *cuisines*, only specialties which are excellent, not as peppery as many Americans believe who may confuse Spanish cooking with Mexican cooking. Fresh vegetables are almost as hard to come by in these countries as in Scandinavia. Otherwise the cooking is good, sometimes startlingly good.

Spain, in spite of high prices in Madrid and other popular tourist centers during the summer season, remains otherwise a very inexpensive country for professional eaters. Austria's low costs have held level for several years, an encouraging note for lovers of *wienerschnitzel*. Almost anybody can afford to eat as high off the hog as he chooses in both these countries. Even at de luxe hotels.

I soured once and for all on de luxe hotel restaurants the afternoon that Kendal, who had been reading E. Phillips Oppenheim, persuaded me to take her to tea at the Negresco in Nice so she could watch international spies slink in and out of the lobby with black cloaks muffling them to the eyes. I found out why spies demand such high wages when I got the check. Nevertheless, some de luxe hotels serve good food, although the criticisms already made in regard to de luxe hotels as places to lay the head at night apply generally to their restaurants as well. Too much display, too little service. A far better deal for the traveler, financially as well as gustatorially, is available in the less expensive *pension* establishments which serve two or three meals a day at a flat price, and must keep their cooking and service standards high to operate. *Pensions* exist everywhere in Europe, and not only offer food and lodging at reasonable prices but make equally reasonable charges for the extras which every eater must expect to pay whenever he tucks a napkin under his chin and squares off at the groceries. These are the *couvert*, service charge, sometimes a tax, and supplemental charges for wine, beer and other liquids. This brings the discussion logically to that aspect of the calory-intake operation which involves a lifted glass rather than mastication.

In approaching the subject of drinking, it is worth observing that Europe is no place either for a conscientious teetotaler or

a rumpot. Europeans are consistent and moderate drinkers who disapprove equally of problem drinkers and teetotalism. Drinking is a social activity, rarely an escape mechanism. You have a jolt or two with your friends, exchange anecdotes, discuss the political situation, and sing when you get rosy enough, instead of picking fights. You may even short-cut the conversation, if language is a problem. The touch of glass to glass establishes an immediate international *rapport* which makes conversation unnecessary.

I once spent a night with my wife in a back-country village in what used to be Serbia. Neither of us spoke more than a few words of Serbian, and since it was a very small, remote village, with no tourist facilities at all, we had trouble finding a room. We finally got a box with a bed in it and a picture of Lenin to keep us company, as well as a promise of dinner. There remained a problem of locating enough gasoline to get us to the next stop when we left in the morning. Because it is more convenient in Serbia to look for gasoline in the late afternoon than in the early morning, I fumbled around with sign language and grunts until I learned that the nearest gasoline depot was at another village some miles away.

A Yugoslav soldier volunteered in sign language to guide me to the gasoline depot. He was, like many Serbs, enormous: six and a half feet tall and skinny at 225 pounds ringside. He cramped himself into the car and guided me across country to the gasoline depot, where I filled up. When I had brought him back I first tried to tip him, then buy him a drink, but could not successfully do either. He shook his head, backed away, said something I did not understand, and disappeared.

We had had a hard day, so Elva went to bed immediately after dinner. I intended to follow her in a few minutes, but while I was paying the dinner check the soldier came back

with three pals, all bigger than he was. I never saw such a squad of skyscrapers in my life. One of them spoke German, which I could understand. It turned out that none of them had ever ridden in a passenger automobile, except for the trip my guide had made with me that afternoon. They wondered if I would take them for a little spin.

I took them for a little spin. It was a small car, intended to seat five normal people. I am not undersized myself, and with a chain of movable Alps for passengers I hardly had room to turn the wheel. One or the other of them was always reaching over to honk the horn or try the cigarette lighter or work the windshield wiper, so we almost climbed a tree more than once. But we got as far as the village groggery without accident. The German-speaking soldier, whose name turned out to be Branko, suggested that we take time out for a shot of *schnapps.*

*Schnapps,* in this case, meant *rakia,* a drink which quickly separates the sheep from the goats. We had a round, then another, then another, then another. After the fourth glass, the biggest of the goon squad wiped his mouth, picked me up like a beer mug, and kissed me on both cheeks. He needed a shave badly. I couldn't slug him because he had both of my arms locked, and anyway I would have broken my knuckles. When he put me down he beamed and said, "*Živio usa.*"

I asked Branko *was gibt,* and who was *usa,* and why should anyone by that name be invited to live forever. Branko said, "Why, Usa is Usa. You come from there. Your country, American. Where they sent us wheat to keep us from starving to death in 1950."

I said, "Oh. Sure. *Živio* Usa. *Živio* Yugoslavia, too."

"*Živio* you."

"*Živio* you, too. *Živio rakia.* Tell your fellow zombies that

I say *živio* to them and the rest of the Yugoslav army, and I bet the five of us could lick the Russians right now, catch as catch can."

That's what *rakia* does to you. The toast called for another round and more kissing. I learned later that the Serbs are great smoochers, without regard to sex, but it was a new experience to me then, and when two of them began nuzzling me at once I fought back, although ineffectually. They sandpapered most of the skin off my face before the *rakia* gave out and we reeled out of the bar arm in arm, singing a marching song that had no distinguishable words but a lot of harmony. The car seemed even more crowded going back than it had getting there, but I reached home without too much trouble and deserted the Yugoslav army before they could kiss me good night. There was a small *contretemps* afterward when I found out that Elva, who had expected me to come to bed five minutes after she did, had become worried at my absence, made inquiries, been able to ascertain only that I had been taken off by a squad of soldiers, presumably to be shot, and had spent the next three hours looking at the picture of Lenin and wondering what she, as a widow, should do next in a strange and remote Serbian village without money, passport or a means of transportation, all of which I had taken with me, and only a few words of the language. There was no more kissing that night.

Although locally produced hard liquors like *rakia* are obtainable in every country, wine and beer are more common drinks. Southern Europeans drink wine with their meals as a matter of course. Per-capita wine consumption in France is about 70 times what it is in the United States, in Italy about 42 times as much, in Spain and Portugal about 37 times as much. Even in Germany, which brews a lot of beer, wine con-

sumption is three and a half times as high as in America. All these countries, as well as Switzerland, Luxembourg, Austria and the Balkan nations, produce excellent wines, and most American eaters in these areas soon find themselves looking for the appearance of a wine bottle on the table as quickly as they would salt and pepper at home. The finest vintage wines, in Europe, are very much cheaper than in the United States. Good *vin ordinaire* sold in bulk is often less expensive than bottled water, with which many Europeans, including children, mix it. The statement of a few general principles having nothing to do with the distinction between a '47 Chambolle-Musigny and a '52 Côte du Rhone, about which there are authorities more informed than I, is in order at this point.

Winebibbers will taste very good wine everywhere at low cost if they consistently order the local grape, something produced in the neighborhood and not imported from another district or country. There are three reasons for this. The first is that local squeezings are distinctive, and should be sampled along with the local *cuisine* which has developed around them. The second is that some good wines do not travel successfully, and can be drunk only in the area where the grapes are grown. The third is that only a sucker would order and pay for a German wine, however excellent, to go with a dinner eaten in the Bordeaux area of France, where fine local wine is served in a carafe at one-quarter of the price, or order an expensive import of that same fine Bordeaux in Munich when he can, for peanuts, drink superb German Rhine wine drawn from a barrel. While a bottle of vintage grape goes well with pressed duck and *crêpes suzette* anywhere, and I would be the last man to refuse a glass of it, a carafe of *vin ordinaire* in the Moselle valley is good Moselle. And inexpensive. This should be remembered.

Inexperienced wine drinkers who plan to seize the opportunity to sample really fine vintage stuff need not worry too much about making mistakes of selection. Any restaurant with a decent cellar has a wine steward who knows which of his bottles tastes best with what, and will usually shake his head at a diner who suggests that a nice bottle of burgundy might go well with the fish. Sometimes you can actually convince wine stewards that you really *do* like burgundy with fish, but not often. They will generally be out of burgundy at that point, and suggest something more appropriate on the wine card. All a visitor has to do is follow where the wine steward leads him, looking to the left for good vintage years and to the right for prices he can afford to pay. The best wine year for decades in western Europe was 1947, which is easy to remember. The AAA puts out a very good free booklet, *Here's How*, which contains, among other useful bits of information, a table of European wine years. The *Guide Michelin* gives the same information, although only for France.

England, Ireland, Belgium, Holland and the Scandinavian nations do not produce native wines. In these countries, any available wine is an import, correspondingly expensive. Here it is best to drink beer with meals. Beer is brewed in all countries. So also is some kind of native firewater which is potent enough to rock any two-fisted drinker to sleep, costs much less than imported whiskey or gin, and can be inhaled from the original package or mixed with what you will. Diners who are used to knocking off four dry martinis before dinner and a couple of Scotch highballs afterward will find that a continuation of the habit in Europe costs plenty. Since there is a Harry's American Bar in practically every European city from Dublin to Dombréna, and most hotels popular with the tourist trade support qualified mixologists, dry martinis and

Scotch highballs are ready to hand everywhere. Their prices are almost as ruinous as in the United States, because the materials are mainly imports. It is very much cheaper, and more interesting, for the traveler to buy a bottle of the native lightning, whether it be called *cognac, pastis, akvavit, schnapps, genever, rakia, slivovitz, ouzo* or *brannt-wein,* and make his own pre-prandial or post-prandial snorts with a setup of ice and mixer ordered from the bellboy. A few European hotels, mostly the expensive ones, impose corkage charges on bottle carriers, but I have never paid one yet. It may be because I avoid expensive hotels, and am discreet about bringing bottles into the joint. In smaller hotels which do not operate a bar, nobody cares.

Scotch whiskey does not qualify as a cheap native firewater, even in Scotland. It is almost as expensive in the British Isles as in Seattle, and there is nothing that can be done about it in either place except pay up or drink beer. Irish whiskey is easier on the purse in Ireland, but slightly harder on the throat than the exported kind you get at home. This is true also of French cognac. At the three-star, or five-year-old level, cognac sold in France for prices ranging generally from $2.50 to $4 a bottle is inferior, although still good enough, to three-star cognacs sold in the U. S. A., and should be bought at the best available price regardless of bottlers' labels. Cognac is cognac if it comes from the Cognac country, advertising claims notwithstanding. V.S.O.P. and X-O or other special-mark cognacs are older, more expensive and generally as smooth as silk, again without regard to label. Spanish and Portuguese brandies are heavier and sweeter than cognac but cheap, and with plenty of authority in their own home countries. *Grappa* in Italy, *akvavit* in the Scandinavian countries, *genever* in Holland, and other national strong waters are a matter of ac-

quired taste, well worth a little experimentation. They are invariably the cheapest hard liquor available within the boundaries of the country where they are produced.

Some of the effects of foreign distilled spirits are very interesting indeed. I remember one evening in Athens when Elva and I celebrated an anniversary by killing a bottle of *ouzo*. The next morning she burst into tears at the sight of two empty egg cups standing on a plate. She said they looked so lonely it broke her heart, and she spent most of the morning sobbing and sniffling and wiping her nose because the world was full of lonely egg cups. On another occasion, after several belts of something called *mastika*, she accepted a challenge by Kendal to go swimming in the moonlight in spite of the fact that neither of them had a bathing suit. Because the ocean shore, at the spot where the challenge was given, was as flat as a pancake, they had to wade four hundred yards in knee-high water to reach a depth that would hide them By that time a small drop in the tide had drained the intervening four hundred yards, across which they returned arm in arm singing "*Ach, du lieber Augustin*," as naked as a pair of peeled onions, while I watched them with my hair standing on end at the thought of what would happen if the law saw them. Travelers with unpredictable wives should be careful of things like *mastika*, which is Turkish in origin and only for people with hard heads.

Boozing is unrestricted in all European countries except Ireland, England, Belgium, Finland, Norway and Sweden, where controls of various strictness vary from mildly irritating to downright ridiculous. In England and Ireland you can buy a bottle in the open market whenever you have the price and the shops are open, but public bars are subject to peculiar and rigidly enforced closing hours. A bottle on hand in a

traveler's hotel room precludes droughts, and is the answer to an embarrassing situation that sometimes arises when the traveler, as a foreigner and non-resident, is entitled to have drinks served to him night and day but cannot order anything for a resident guest during off hours. In Belgium, bottles can be bought freely in the stores, but hard liquor is nowhere served by the shot except in so-called "clubs," which are so called because they club you to death with the bar check. The only acceptable alternative to a private bottle in Belgium is beer-drinking. Wine is an import, therefore too expensive.

In Norway, government-monopoly liquor stores exist only in the big cities, and while a visitor can buy cases of the stuff at these stores without restriction or permit, he can't lap up an across-the-bar shot of hard stuff before 3 P.M., or on Saturday or Sunday, or anywhere at any time outside of certain cities, only beer (domestic) and wine (imported) or the package goods he is foresighted enough to carry with him. Bootleggers operate by buying a stock at the store on weekdays, selling it to less clever people on Saturday night.

Sweden has approximately the same system. You can buy all the bottled goods you want at government monopoly stores, except on Saturday or Sunday, but there are no bars in the country and drinking in restaurants is subject to control; nothing before noon on weekdays or before 1 P.M. on Sundays (except that any waiter will bring you a shot, colored with a little grenadine to look like fruit juice), a limited amount between then and 3 P.M. You are also required by law to order—and eat—at least a "well-buttered" sandwich before tying into the Demon Rum, the theory being that the butter will keep you from having d.t.'s after the second drink. Once the well-buttered sandwich is in place and 3 P.M. rolls by, you can pour as much alcohol down as you can hold, *except* that if

you are driving a car you had better not get involved in an accident even if you are the innocent party. In Sweden they give you a blood test and a jail sentence just for smelling wrong.

Finland also sells bottled goods in government monopoly stores, and there are restaurants where the sandwich, well-buttered or otherwise, needn't be eaten if you don't feel up to it. Nobody goes wholly dry anywhere in Europe.

It is worth noting, too, that Europeans rarely get drunk as Americans understand drunkenness, the kind that shows in walk, manner and loose language. If this statement does not seem to square with publicity lately given to the problem of national alcoholism in France, for example, let it be said that a French alcoholic is slightly loaded all the time, from early morning on, without ever losing his equilibrium, his clarity of speech or his good manners.

Bottled water (including a brand which, according to the advertisements, goes "pschittl" when uncapped), tea, coffee, milk and soft drinks are available in Europe as in the United States, although not under so many different trade names. I personally do not enjoy Turkish coffee, which is powdered beans mixed with sugar and brewed in a cute little copper pot with an inch of sweet mud on the bottom. Some people love the gritty taste. Other European blends of coffee, unjustly maligned by some travelers who strangled on postwar substitutes which disappeared years ago, are generally as good or better than American blends, usually stronger and blacker. Tea blends are the same as sold in the United States. Coca-Cola and a few local imitations rear their heads almost everywhere, in spite of coalitions formed by native Communists and desperate vineyardists to scotch the drink as a capitalistic drug and a growing menace to the wine market. Milk in England, Ireland, Switzerland, Holland and the Scandinavian

countries is good, rich and safe for kids to drink. Elsewhere, a good idea is to ask for it boiled, because of the informal way it is frequently handled in transit from cow to customer. Plain drinking water is exactly as safe everywhere in Europe as it is in the United States, by which I mean to imply that in cities and towns where several generations of residents have been drinking regularly from the tap without ill effect, a visitor can expect to do the same, and need not ask anxiously, "Is it safe? Is it *really* safe?" whereas he might as well cut his throat as go around sampling dipperfuls from picturesque old mossy wells on the downhill side of a barnyard. A reasonable amount of discrimination is advisable everywhere.

Reasonable discrimination is really all there is to eating and drinking well and enjoyably in Europe within the bounds of any budget. There are a large number of European bars, and a few restaurants, which attempt to serve American style. But while a Manhattan cocktail comes out like a Manhattan cocktail if the proper ingredients are used, cheeseburgers and Waldorf salads rarely taste right the way Europeans prepare them. They are foreign dishes to Europeans, who wouldn't themselves eat a Waldorf salad in the last moments of a tortured death by starvation, and whose opinion it is that they can come up with a better end product starting with the same raw materials. Since they are more often right about this than not, it is only sensible to eat what they eat, and go where they go to get the best meal at the best price. A traveler should give up the generally hopeless search for good cheeseburgers until he gets home. Otherwise he is going to pass up an opportunity to sink his teeth into something like *paella valenciana* or smoked Danish eel or *zuppa di pesce* or *feuilleté au jambon fromagé* or *sis köfte* or some other equally delicious preparation. Until you have tackled all of these at least once, you haven't really lived.


BUVEZ
Coca-Cola

# 8

## TRINKGELD, AND WHY

*Tipping money, in several languages. The European service charge. How to recognize it for what it isn't. Overtipping, and its dangers. Undertipping, and* its *dangers. An easy method for calculating tips in any of various currencies, including the British. The author learns why it is dangerous to lay out a cash tip when signing restaurant checks, and passes the information along.* Maîtres d'hôtel, sommeliers, *waiters and how to reward them with their just deserts. Shipboard tipping: as easy as cutting a pie. Tipping in soft currencies at a cash profit to the tipper but without detriment to the tippee.*

A popular fable has it that the word "tip" derives from the initial letters of the phrase "To Insure Promptness" painted on

a waiter's kitty in a tavern in Merrie Olde England. Like many fables, *it sounds* possible, but is essentially malarkey. The English "tip" is "tipple," or "tippling," money, a gratuity given for a drink, as is *trinkgeld* in German, *pourboire* in French, *propina* in Spanish, *mancia* in Italian, *drickspengar* and its doublets in the Scandinavian languages, on and on through other examples. It is regrettable but true that a tip will no more insure promptness of service than it will insure properly scrambled eggs. It is, or should be, a reward for both, if and when the customer gets them. Instead, it has become a universal institution like matrimony, and no visitor to Europe is prepared for the voyage until he knows what European tipping standards are, and why there is such a thing as being pound-wise and penny-foolish as well as the other way round.

In Europe, as in most of Latin America and other areas which American travelers can freely visit at the time of this writing, a charge for "service" is automatically added to many bills when service of any kind is involved, *even* theoretically. Yugoslavia, so far, has maintained its integrity as a people's democracy where capitalistic insults of a cash gift from a superior to a menial are not countenanced, but I never met anyone in Yugoslavia who wouldn't accept this kind of insult gratefully, and I will bet six, two and even that Yugoslavia adopts the institution of the automatic service charge within three years, Marxian principles or no Marxian principles.

In some areas outside of Yugoslavia the service charge is tacked onto everything from the price of a glass of beer to the over-all tab at a summer resort. In other areas it may be added to a restaurant check but not to a hotel bill, or vice versa. The rate of addition ranges from 10 per cent up to whatever the traffic will bear in very de luxe establishments, and the charge is made theoretically "in lieu of tips." But this is only theoreti-

cal, because the waiter or steward or bartender or maid or *concierge* or whoev [illegible] receives it whether [illegible] of gratuity is involved. To buy or bribe something special in the way of little courtesies from the hired help, further outlays are necessary and advisable.

The first time I ever encountered the automatic service *charge was many years ago in the restaurant* of a plush hote where I was dining with my family because we hadn't ye learned to avoid restaurants in plush hotels as a matter o principle. The food wasn't very good, and the waiter didn' burn his rubber heels off bringing soup from the kitchen whil it was still warm, but I thought we got approximately enougl attention to justify the 12 per cent which was added to th lunch check "in lieu of tips." I remember remarking to Elva "Now that is a really sensible idea. Of course it's more than h deserves, but at least I don't have to worry about whether h is going to hate me more than I hate him after we leave. They ought to do it that way in America."

"Aren't you going to leave him something extra?"

"Why? He has his 12 per cent. It says so right there, see?"

"I still think you ought to leave the small change."

"Nonsense. You don't understand these things."

I retracted the words later. The next time we came into the dining room, the waiter spotted us immediately and chivvied us to a table in an alcove behind a pillar, where nobody even looked at us for half an hour. It was a different man, this time, who finally brought the soup. I paid him his standard 12 per cent, as I had the first man, and the next time we came back to the dining room the staff herded us practically into the kitchen with the dishwashers. I don't remember exactly what we got to eat, but I'm sure it was cooked to order for us.

as for a short taxi ride or a single drink. A careless traveler will be tagged with higher and inescapable service charges, 20 per cent and up in tourist traps which he should learn to avoid after the first clipping. In these same tourist traps he may pay not only a high service charge but an equally high luxury tax against which screaming is of no avail and which, with the service charge, may augment the bill by as much as 40 per cent. There is nothing to do about this except pay for the lesson, and learn.

European hotels usually add a flat service charge to the bill for the benefit of the entire hotel staff, but here a traveler is never expected to augment the service charge when the bill is paid. He will be expected to tip anyone who gives him individual service. This includes, first and foremost, the *concierge*, for reasons already discussed, and the porter who lugs a traveler's bags to his room. The baggage porter *is*, like Cerberus at the gates of Hell, the first tippee a traveler must get by, and he will pass the word about you, good or bad, to the rest of the staff. A small but immediate investment with hotel baggage porters is bread cast upon the waters. In computing the amount of this investment in terms of unfamiliar currency, it is useful to remember what a "tip" is, essentially money for a drink, so that if a minimum service like the portage of a light bag seems to justify a gift of the price of a glass of beer, as it usually does everywhere, then the tip for this service should be sixpence or 50 francs or 80 lire or 2 pesetas or half a mark or whatever a glass of beer costs in the coin of the realm, regardless of the fact that 2 pesetas are worth 5 cents American, and half a mark three times as much. Any attempt to relate European tips to American cash equivalents is unfair to one or the other of the parties involved. Thinking in terms of dollars and cents, you either reward somebody with

four days' wages for bringing you a pitcher of ice water, or undertip disgracefully for real service. If you do not yourself drink beer or some other equivalent tipple and for that reason do not know what a drink is worth, I concede that the system is a little difficult to apply. But it is a lot less hard on the budget than the indiscriminate and unnecessary tossing around of too-heavy rewards, and it makes a shilling worth what it should be worth, an American quarter instead of 14 cents, on its home grounds.

I refer to the sterling area generally. The monetary system of which the pound sterling is a unit was invented by the Romans before the decimal system had been thought up, and I wouldn't be a bit surprised if the decline and fall of the Roman empire could be traced directly to this fact. Twelve pence make one bob; 20 shillings make a quid; a guinea, which exists only in theory, is 21 shillings; a farthing won't buy anything; half a crown is 2 shillings and sixpence, but there is no whole crown; 2 bob make a florin, 2 thruppenny bits make a sixpence, 2 ha'p'nies make a penny, and try to figure 10 per cent of £3/6/3. It isn't three-and-six, as anyone can learn by laying out three-and-six for a tip in Glasgow and having a cold, silent but deadly Scotch curse put on him by a hard-working waiter. The only thing to do in the sterling area is learn to read a pound as 20 shillings and forget the pennies. This procedure turns £3/6/3 into 66 shillings, a relatively sensible figure to work with. Below the pound level a traveler is still in troubled waters, but one shilling to one-and-six for every 10 shillings on the tab is workable, and sixpence is the minimum tip everywhere, for anything. You can't buy a decent drink for less than sixpence.

Undertipping will earn justifiable black looks everywhere, and crumbs in the traveler's lap. Overtipping can be even

more dangerous, in extreme circumstances. It is not true, as has sometimes been alleged, that Europeans are a pack of crooks whose main function in life is to clip tourists, but there are operators everywhere in the world who keep an eye peeled for reckless spenders. I met one of these in a Brussels cabaret one night when an American, a stranger to me who was sitting at a table with two of the cabaret hostesses to keep him company, beckoned me over to his table and said cordially, "Hey there, George, you're looking fine. When did you leave Kuwait?"

Because my name isn't George and I had never been in Kuwait, I told him he had made a mistake. He stood up and offered to punch me in the nose for trying to make him look like a fool in front of his girl friends. I sat down without any more argument and let him buy champagne at $14 a bottle or thereabouts while we talked about Kuwait, and good old Andy, and good old Charlie, and remember the night we all got looped on *arrack* and wrecked the jeep, George? I remembered, not wanting a punch in the nose. He was only mildly oiled, but he was having a good time, as anybody would with plenty of money and two pretty Belgians to spend it on, as well as good old George from Kuwait to talk to. He tipped the waiter far too much each time a bottle of wine came to the table, gave the hostesses hundred-franc notes every now and then for the exercise, and threw folded bills at the entertainers whenever they came out on the floor. I repeat that he wasn't really sozzled, only happy. But the impression he created by throwing money around was that he was a nice fat plum, ripe for the gathering, and when he left the table to go to the washroom, he never came back. Some minutes later I heard from a waiter that there had been a small trouble in the washroom when an American succumbed to a *crise de nerfs*, claiming that his pocket had been picked. Force had been

necessary to deposit the unfortunate in the street, *voilà tout.* I don't know who got his roll, but it wasn't good old George. He could have had just as much fun and incurred much less wear and tear by tipping conventionally.

As long as the real nature of tipple money is recognized for what it is, any traveler can calculate proper tips in any currency as soon as he learns what a given amount of that currency will buy in beer, or *slivovitz*, or some other small liquid luxury. In America, 25 cents is generally considered a minimum tip for any service by the bellboy because 25 cents is about the smallest coin a bellboy can use to wet his whistle. A traveler disembarking from the boat-train at the Gare St. Lazare in Paris will find that luggage porters at the *gare* earn, in francs, approximately the price of one French beer for each bag carried, including the extra 10 or 15 per cent by which the traveler augments their flat charge per bag. Thereafter the traveler has all European railway, airfield and dockside luggage porters taped, whether they make a charge or accept gratuities, and regardless of the currency involved. It amounts to one beer per bag. A helpful hotel *concierge* is worth a bottle of wine a day, the cheapest *vin ordinaire* or vintage grape, depending on the nature of the hotel and how useful the *concierge* has been in providing proper connections. European room maids rate one beer to two beers a day, depending on the same factors. Special services by others should never be rewarded with less than the price of the cheapest local drink, and there are times when a bottle of champagne is in order. Or even a case of the stuff, for the right word on the right horse at the right time. But at local prices, never at Atlantic City rates. The principle is to convert from American tipping standards according to proof alcohol, not dollars and cents.

A traveler making one- or two-night stands at European

attendants, museum attendants, door-openers and others who theoretically render a tippable service but actually do not, can be smaller than earned tips. One-quarter to one-half a beer will do as a general rule, although if you get a hot streak at any European gambling casino you are expected to reward everybody in the place generously, from washroom attendants and doormen to the *croupiers*, for bringing you luck, and if you lose all your winnings before you leave there are no refunds. Whenever a question exists about the propriety of tipping in Europe, the answer is always to have money in your hand if the potential tippee hesitates before turning away from you. An offered tip may be declined, but it is never an insult. Even in People's Democracies.

An important exception to the general rule concerns customs and other government officials. A traveler should *never* volunteer to tip any of them, in any circumstances. They are usually as honest as the day is long, and a tip can be misunderstood as a bribe. The traveler is liable to find himself under suspicion, and unpacking everything he owns for examination, even facing a stiff fine for his attempted generosity. A customs official who expects his palm crossed in return for giving bags the once over lightly will let you know about it in his own way, either by inviting contributions to the Customs, Immigration and Coast Guard Widows' and Orphans' Fund, or selling a ticket to next year's ball for whatever you wish to pay, sir, or bumming a package of cigarettes. A few, a very few, European customs officials will take this advantage of a traveler. It sometimes simplifies border crossings if the traveler co-operates, but it is rough on the next man who refuses to pay the squeeze.

Volunteer guides, travel-agency employees who meet clients at the train or put them aboard a boat, quaint characters who

hold still for photographs, bus-tour barkers and other casual contacts sometimes expect a tip, sometimes do not. The best rule is to make the offer, as unobtrusively as possible. Some who refuse a cash gift will accept a package of cigarettes, which are otherwise no longer useful tipping currency in Europe. I have already referred to the Dutch amateur-guide association, members of which flatly refuse any reward for their services. People like these, and friendly strangers on the street who are clearly not in the tourist-steering business, should never be pressed to accept money they have refused once, because some courteous but hot-blooded citizens like the Spaniards and Portuguese are liable to cut your ears off for the insult after they have *said* "No" politely. On the other hand, a traveler can frequently make some kind of a gesture toward babies in the family—Europeans have millions of babies—when *parents* are too proud to accept for themselves. I have in mind such an occasion in Nazaré, a small fishing village on the Portuguese coast between Lisbon and Oporto.

Elva wanted to take a movie color shot of a group of fishermen and their families on the beach. Nazaré fishermen dress in screaming Scotch plaids, red and orange and purple and green and yellow tartans which come out well on color film. She asked permission and was told to go ahead. The fishermen took their positions. The bigger children clustered around, all the mothers lifted up babies to bring them within camera range, and Elva ground away.

After it was over I tried to tip the fishermen, and had the tip courteously declined. It was beneath their dignity. I thought it a graceful gesture to tuck *escudos* into the chubby little fists of all the tots kicking in their mothers' arms, which I did for some moments before noticing that the chubby little fists were getting bigger and hornier as I went along. The

women, in a remarkable demonstration of village solidarity, and with what might be called vicarious philanthropy, were snatching up every child within reach, including struggling strangers of twelve and fourteen whom they could barely get off the ground, muscular kids able to man a dory single-handed in a storm and bring it home full of fish, to wrestle them under my nose and pant, "Ah, *senhor,* do not overlook *my youngest, it is his saint's day tomorrow. Heaven rewards* generosity to the young and innocent."

It was a good act, and worth rewarding. I went along with it, an *escudo* at a time, until one of the babies blew cigar smoke in my face as I handed him his coin.

In the majority of European restaurants, a guest tips his waiter, nobody else. Even in superelegant eating houses it is never necessary to bribe the *maître d'hôtel* for a table, but if he gives you the treatment he will gracefully accept half of what you gave the table waiter, or more if you are sucker enough to force more on him. In these same superelegant restaurants there will be a *sommelier* or wine steward to take orders for liquid refreshments, elsewhere the table waiter's job, and a *sommelier* expects 10 or 12 per cent of the charge made for the liquids to be tucked into his palm as he bows you out the door. Otherwise he may trip you, and in any event will serve you inferior wine the next time you return.

European night clubs, like all night clubs, are by their nature clip joints. Prices are high, service charges added on top are higher. So are luxury taxes. A night-club patron never gets much service for the charges made, so if he is not afraid of having waiters put the evil eye on him as soon as his back is turned, he can pay the bill and service charge as submitted and let it go at that, without further voluntary contributions. This, however, is an exceptional case. Generally, outside of

night clubs, cabarets and similar deadfalls, a good rule for the traveler to follow is: When in doubt, tip. But tip sensibly, with regard to the purchasing power of the tipple-money. Five pesetas, roughly one American dime, would be a small reward for service in Cincinnati, but it is one-fifth of a laboring man's daily wage in Spain, ten times the daily cash wage of an Army conscript.

This distinction between relative wage scales can be borne in mind aboard ship. On American passenger vessels, the service staff earns, and spends, dollars. An American ship steward's standard of living is as high as that of other Americans, and because his tip sights are correspondingly elevated, the service he renders for a given amount is relatively low. European ship service staffs earn wages which are a fourth or a fifth as much as American wages, set their tip sights accordingly, and deliver much more for the same money.

On American passenger vessels, an easy rule of thumb is 10 per cent of the cost of ship fare and bar bills combined, to be parceled out according to services rendered. No more is necessary, and anyone who tips on a grander scale would do better to hand the excess to the Community Chest. This percentage applies to individual travelers, but can be shaded downward if two or more people travel in a party. A single traveler paying $250 for first-class passage and drinking nothing but water *en route*, if any traveler can manage this, should earmark $25 for tips, while a couple traveling together in a single cabin for $500 and enjoying $50 worth of hospitality at the bar can fairly get off for a total of $40 or $45. The same percentages hold true for second- and third-class travel at lower-cost ticket levels. The service in second- and third-class accommodations is frequently of the same quality as in first class. It is just spread thinner, like butter in an orphanage.



Second- and third-class stewards expect to get smaller tips from more people.

Bar bills should be supplemented by 10, 12 or 15 per cent, which will take care of the whole bar staff from mix-man to the waiter who brings the tinkling glasses. A ship passenger can sign bar chits and pay in a lump at the end of the trip, or liquidate liabilities as he drinks his way across. Service charges are rarely added at sea, so signing ship chits is not dangerous. The wine steward in the dining room will generally expect to hang his tabs on the guest's signature until the last night aboard. He gets the same percentage as the bar staff, nothing at all if the passenger drinks nothing at all.

At least 5 per cent of the base ship fare, or half of all tips exclusive of those incurred because of drinking and similar extranautical activities, should be divided between the passenger's cabin steward and his dining-room steward, with the breakage leaning in favor of the cabin steward if the passenger spends more meal hours moaning in bunk than tucking away free proteins in the dining salon. If two or more cabins are occupied, therefore obliging two or more cabin stewards to work for a party which is served by one dining-room waiter, some further weighting in favor of the cabin stewards is appropriate, not too much. The other 5 per cent of the base fare can be parceled around among any other ship staff members who pay the most attention to the passenger; $2 or $3 or $5 to the deck steward, the same to the bath steward, a five to the chief steward if he remembers your name once in a while, and so on. On shipboard as elsewhere, no traveler need tip anybody who hasn't done him a service. Pursers and other ship's officers are never tipped in any circumstances, so it is easy to go at ship-tipping simply by calculating the basic 10 per cent at the beginning of the voyage, then spending the

rest of the crossing figuring how you want to cut the melon around after taking care of the dining steward and cabin steward. Bar bills, of course, are hard to calculate in advance. But that is true anywhere, and it is not difficult to add 10 or 12 or 15 per cent to a bar bill at the end of the voyage, even with a hangover.

On European ships, the same relative distributions of the total tip apply, although the percentages can be lower if the traveler chooses to make them lower. Europeans, as a class, do not tip as heavily as Americans. They do not have as much money to begin with, and are sometimes restricted in the amount of cash they can take with them on foreign voyages. I sailed to New York on a Dutch vessel with a Hollander friend who, in submitting a travel budget for approval by the Dutch authorities, was allowed 17½ guilders, about $4.50, to cover all tips for the transatlantic crossing. He was in third class, but $4.50 is pretty small tipple-money even for third class. Still, he left the ship under his own power instead of on a stretcher, so any traveler can tip practically what he wants to on a European ship, and still take the steward's thanks with him when he walks down the gangplank. At the risk of appearing to be a reckless spendthrift, however, I offer a suggestion that travelers on transatlantic European vessels tip as well as they would on transatlantic American vessels.

This apparent inconsistency is not a real one. I have urged that American travelers in Europe avoid tipping according to American money levels, which is heavy overtipping. It is unnecessary, expensive, ruinous to service standards and hard on other travelers, European and American, who follow in the first man's footsteps. This is not necessarily true in the transatlantic trade. Here European service staffs are in direct competition with other service staffs on ships of various na-

Transatlantic airlines, as everyone should know by now, discourage tipping of their employees, and while you must always slip something to the porter who smashes your baggage in the air terminal, tipping aloft is strictly unnecessary. This may be one reason that more travelers are crossing the world's oceans today by plane than by ship.

Shipboard tips within the confines of Europe, including coastal and inland waters, should be made in the currency of the country having jurisdiction at one end of the voyage or the other, although dollar bills are snapped at gratefully everywhere. Tips and other aboard-ship expenditures on transatlantic vessels can be made sometimes only with dollars, sometimes in any of various currencies. There is no general rule applicable, except that American carriers and their staffs naturally expect to garner dollars more often than European carriers and their staffs, and those European carriers which hold out for dollars during the west-to-east crossing will often accept other kinds of money when sailing east-to-west, for bar-bills, deck chairs and trap-shooting. The help aboard such vessels would very naturally prefer to be tipped on a reverse basis. That is to say, a steward with tips to spend in New York and Barcelona would prefer to land in New York with dollars, in Barcelona with pesetas, rather than vice versa. Since pesetas can be acquired at a discount in New York by an embarking passenger, and are accepted by stewards at face value, everybody profits from a little forethought.

There are relatively few rackets worked deliberately to garner tips in Europe. One of these few is known as the Jigsaw Cut, or You-Take-the-Topcoat-and-I'll-Take-the-Waistcoat. It is most popular in a certain European country which I will not name because the racket may be attempted any-

where and is easily recognizable as it unfolds. A typical Jigsaw was worked on me in a hotel in a city the name of which slip my memory.

It was a one-night stopover. We were three together, so we took two rooms and bath. After we got them, Kendal wanted a lemonade while she bathed. I wanted a siphon of fizzwater and some ice to go with a bottle I had in my bag, and Elva wanted a suit pressed. I rang the bell.

There are frequently as many as three call buttons in European hotel rooms—one for the maid, one for the waiter, one for the porter. I buzzed the waiter first, naturally. When he came, I told him about the liquid refreshments. He returned with the ice, fizzwater and a bar check. No lemonade. Because a traveler can't tip much less than a nickel or its equivalent for a waiter's service even in Europe, and because he was insistent that bar checks had to be paid as rendered, I liquidated him and the check with more than he deserved and sent him back for the lemonade. Meanwhile Elva had rung for the maid, and gave her the suit to press. A new waiter arrived with the lemonade and another bar check, promoting a second tip. The maid came back with Elva's pressed skirt, for which she was entitled to a tip because she had pressed it herself. The coat had gone to the hotel valet, who brought it back later. The charge for his service went on the bill, with the customary 15 per cent added for service, but you can't turn hotel valets away from the door without pressing at least a few groats on them. In the morning, when we left, there was a different room girl on hand for each of the two rooms, and two palms to cross. The porter handled part of the luggage, a bellboy took a bag, the elevator operator co-operated. That was three more tips where only one should have sprouted, and I still hadn't got by the *concierge* or the boy who wiped windshields in the

hotel garage. All in all, it cost me not only the 15 per cent service charge on the hotel bill but another 20 or 30 per cent extra. I have not yet figured a way to beat expert Jigsaw players except by staring them down, tipless, which is a hard thing for most travelers to do. A man with iron nerve could probably handle them as they deserve to be handled.

Luckily for travelers, this racket is a rare one in spite of the often stated fact that Europeans are tip-hungry. They are. They are also frequently bread-hungry. Wage scales are so low in many parts of Europe that tips are essential supplemental earnings. A traveler should always bear this in mind. But European service staffs do not expect anything comparable to the gratuities which are appropriate in America, and those guidebooks which state, or imply, that a visitor to Europe should carry his American tipping standards along with him are misinforming their readers as much as they do when they say he must take his toothpaste and instant coffee with him, or count on a minimum of $20 or $30 or $40 a day to get by. In the immortal words of George Gershwin, it ain't necessarily so. Europeans, who live there, know this.

I am here talking about facts, not penny-pinching as a way of life preferable to generosity. From a philosophical viewpoint, overtipping is hardest on the travelers who are responsible for it, because it cheapens the value of what the tip will buy. Undertipping is hardest on the guy trying to earn a living. You are admittedly a sucker if you err in one direction, but a Scrooge if you err in the other. When in doubt, tip, and if you make it a little more instead of a little less, you and the waiter will both feel better about it afterward. Even though you realize that you *are* a sucker, and have violated every established rule of the Ancient and Honorable Order of Skinflints.

# 9

## THE GREEKS STILL HAVE A WORD FOR IT

*The usefulness of English in Europe. Cash benefits which accrue to the traveler with even a slight knowledge of other languages. Phrasebooks, good and bad but always better than none. Money-conversion tables, good and bad and homemade. High values to be derived from "please." A few simple and easily memorized formalities.*

One of the most pleasant preliminaries to any European trip is the planning of it. A traveler can spend enjoyable weeks or months poring over maps and piles of free tourist literature, working out elaborate programs to put him in such-and-such

man who could talk a kind of French. He told us that "*nay nay*" meant "*oui, oui,*" so we were on the right road. But our troubles weren't finished even then. "No" in Greek, ὄχι, is pronounced something like *oui* in French, and the garage man explained that when he said the Greek *nay nay* meant *oui oui,* he was referring to the French *oui oui* and not to the Greek *oui oui,* which really meant *non non* or, as he had been informed, nay nay in English.

This was so thoroughly discouraging that I almost turned the car around and went back to Skoplje. The only thing that deterred me was the memory of the miserable sixty minutes we had spent wondering if we were on our way through a gap in the Iron Curtain into Bulgaria and more language troubles, not to mention a Communist jail for spying. All the difficulty could have been avoided if we had not lost the 25-cent Greek-English phrasebook I had bought in Trieste to preclude just such difficulties.

Luckily for the average American traveler, English is widely understood and will serve as a means of communication almost everywhere in Europe, not counting odd corners like the Thessalonian plain. French was once the universal language, and is still a most important auxiliary. But English is fast coming to the front. Where an educated European of the last generation spoke French as a matter of course with foreigners, and learned English, if at all, as a secondary subject, the current generation learns both English and French. In countries like Holland, Denmark and Switzerland, where educational standards are high and a middle-school student is expected to be familiar with three languages besides his own before he graduates, English will take a traveler comfortably anywhere except in the provinces. This is not to say that *everybody* in Dutch, Danish and Swiss cities understands English, but

Our only trouble, at the moment, was that we were lost, or thought we were. We had been driving for twelve hours over badly rutted roads and didn't know that we were even headed in the right direction. It was raining like hell. There were no road markers of any kind in that part of the country, and the plain we were crossing was completely barren; no lights, no towns, no service stations, no signs, no telephone poles, no fences, no anything to see except rain and mud in the headlights, not even too much of the rain and mud. But we did pass occasional flocks of sheep, and I reasoned that where there were sheep there ought to be shepherds. When we caught up with a fairly large flock, I poked a flashlight through the window and waved the beam around in the murk until I spotted a man with a shepherd's crook in his hand.

He waded through sheep and mud until he reached the car. I stabbed my finger a couple of times in the direction we were going and said distinctly, "Saloniki?"

He nodded and said, just as distinctly, "*Nay, nay.*"

It sunk me. When a man nods his head and says "*Nay, nay*" at you, it's like having somebody say "Come in" while closing the door in your face. You don't know which gesture is the directive. I realized that "*nay, nay*" might mean something other than "no, no" in Thessaly, but then a nod of the head might mean something other than "Yes, yes." I tried "Saloniki?" and the finger-stabbing again, he nodded and said "*Nay, nay*" again, and when I kept it up, still hopeful, he got sore and stalked away with his sheep, waving his arms and yelling angrily, "*Nay nay nay nay nay nay*, Saloniki!"

There was nothing we could do but follow the road we were on unless we wanted to turn around and return the way we had come, which we did not. We kept going until we hit a stretch of asphalt about an hour later and found a garage

man who could talk a kind of French. He told us that "*nay nay*" meant "*oui, oui,*" so we were on the right road. But our troubles weren't finished even then. "No" in Greek, ὄχι, is pronounced something like *oui* in French, and the garage man explained that when he said the Greek *nay nay* meant *oui oui*, he was referring to the French *oui oui* and not to the Greek *oui oui*, which really meant *non non* or, as he had been informed, nay nay in English.

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most people do and there is always some friendly multilingual eager beaver within earshot who will interpret. In other European countries, all travel agencies, all tourist organizations, all information bureaus, all large hotels, most smaller hotels, most large shops, many smaller shops, many restaurants and some *bagnos*, a word which the Italians apply to bathing houses as well as to certain other establishments, are staffed with people who speak not only English but several other languages as well, and there are tons of explanatory pamphlets, guidebooks and similar material printed in English for American visitors. English, arm-waving, and a pleasant disposition will do as a minimum almost anywhere.

But it is easier and a lot more enjoyable to prowl a foreign country with a basic vocabulary of that country's language, particularly in the provinces and odd corners. The vocabulary needn't be large, only workable: "Yes" and "No," "How much?" "Where?" "When?" and similar fundamentals. The formalities are most important in Europe: "Please," "Thank you," "You're welcome," "Excuse me," "Good day," "Good-bye."

A French shopkeeper greets customers when they enter his store, thanks them for their business, says good-bye when they leave, and opens the door for them. This is standard operating procedure. If you don't reciprocate with equal *savoir faire* the storekeeper thinks you are uneducated, and while he will catch the spirit behind an ordinary "Thank you," it takes only five minutes to memorize *merci bien*, *pas de quoi*, and *bon jour*. Similarly with *dankeschön*, *bitteschön*, and *guten Morgen*, or *muchas gracias*, *de nada* and *buenos dias*, or *grazie*, *prego* and *buon giorno*. The shopkeeper will like you a lot better for it, and even an elementary vocabulary can pay off in better prices on the merchandise.

I am not just beating a cake-tin, as they say in Yiddish, about


vrouwen
heren
SEÑORAS
CABALLEROS
DAMES
SIGNORE

possible cash savings. There are, in Europe as anywhere else, some tradesmen who scale prices upward according to what they think the traffic will bear, others who approach each transaction with a kind of open-minded, what-will-the-harvest-bring? attitude. The first group is inclined to take advantage of obvious *auslanders* who don't know enough to say "Please" or "How much?" properly, therefore must be equally unfamiliar with going price levels, and cannot even bleat intelligibly when nipped. With this crew, a minimum use of English and a maximum use of their own tongue tends to keep prices in line. They suspect that maybe you know the current value of a kilo of potatoes after all, and can at the very least complain to a cop if they are too rough.

Representatives of the second group are the stall-keepers in the Covered Bazaar of Istanbul, one of the most fascinating places in the world to shop for jewelry, rugs, ornaments, antiques, silks, leatherwork and what have you. Here everybody in trade speaks at least six languages, and while English will do as well as another, the sellers measure your stature as a potential bargainer by what evidence you give of having been around. I first visited the Covered Bazaar fresh from four years in Latin America, so I spoke Spanish and some Portuguese as well as English. Besides that, I could get by in French and had memorized enough Turkish to say "Oh, what a bandit!" and "What's the *final* price?" I had an entertaining quadrilingual conversation with a jeweler which lasted for half an hour before we even looked at his stock in trade, and then I bought my wife a necklace and a pair of earrings for only about twice what they were worth. Anybody who spoke nothing but English would have been helpless putty in the hands of that slick Turk, and would have ended up settling for four times what I did.

A good, workable phrasebook is a sound investment to be made before the traveler enters any foreign country, and the more time he has to study it in advance, the better off he will be. The phrasebook must be intelligible, however. I have seen nicely printed jobs, expensive ones, which list hundreds of useful phrases in English and another language or languages without any pronunciation key at all, the assumption being that any knucklehead can pronounce German and Danish words like *unglücklicherweise* and *højderyg* even if he doesn't know B from a banana in either language. These books are worthless. Only slightly more valuable are those which provide a pronunciation key but apply it to pre-formed sentences applicable only to certain restricted circumstances and impossible to find quickly in the book even when the circumstances arise. I have in mind a Portuguese-English jewel which translates phonetically the sentence, "The parliament is a legislative body, but I don't know why they banished those men." I expect to have no opportunity in my lifetime to reel this one off, in Portuguese or any other language. Neither do I expect to be able to use, "Master Mortimer will receive the post in the drawing room, Jetta," although I have a book which tells me how to shape the words in Croat. A simple "I don't know" and "The mail, please" would substitute adequately for both of these contrived sentences, leaving the jaws intact for something really useful, like eating.

The best phrasebooks are the simplest, those with an understandable phonetic key and plenty of single words plus the building blocks for elementary sentences. During the Second World War the United States Army put out a series of such books for the use of G.I. Joe in the foreign field. These were among the most practical ever published, and the models have been copied since for civilian travelers. With these, you

learn "Yes," "No," "What," "How much?" and so on, phonetically, then the formalities, then simple phrase-beginnings like "Where is—" and "At what time—" and "How do you say—." From there on in, it is apple pie, and no imperfect subjunctives necessary. One of these books, supplemented by a two-way pocket dictionary for ready reference to unfamiliar words, is the best small package a traveler to any foreign country can carry along with his passport and billfold. They cost almost nothing even when they aren't given away free by air lines, steamships or tourist bureaus.

In buying them, however, the traveler must make certain that the phonetic key is something he can understand and pronounce, not a jumble of gibberish. I got one once which phoneticized a simple "uh" sound as "e(r)," the "r" in parenthesis to indicate that it really wasn't sounded at all, and the general idea being, apparently, that "er" was properly pronounced "uh," as in "I-er-don't speak the-er-language very well." It's a novel approach, but it isn't easy to follow in print.

Many beginners in foreign languages feel shy about using the few words they have learned. Their accents are lousy, and they know they are going to stumble around and sweat big pearls of perspiration to finish a long sentence. This is not necessarily a drawback. Europeans are tolerant of foreigners, and appreciate what is involved in a clearly difficult effort by strangers to speak their language. The fact that your accent is terrible may make them smile, as anybody is liable to smile at hearing "Vere iss de station-railroad, blease?" But they don't laugh in your face. It isn't good manners. And the attempt you make to get across to them in their tongue pays off in even more ways than the ones I have already m[illegible]

My family and I [illegible] Italy for a [illegible] country with a bare dozen [illegible] an. We [illegible] at the


MÜCEVHERAT
ALİ MUHİDDİN
BOOK

phrase book while we were there, *buon giorno*-ing everybody and throwing *arrivederci*'s and *per favore*'s and *ecco*'s around like natives until we learned, mostly by percolation, how to order a meal and haggle prices with what amounted to fluency even though our accent was thick enough to run through a grater and sprinkle on a plate of *rigatoni.* Besides that, our clothes would have given us away to the local boys even if we spoke Italian like the chief of police. But Elva was shopping one afternoon in Florence when an American couple approached her and said, "Excuse us, *signora.* We heard you speaking such good English, we wondered if you would translate for us."

Elva came home making like a Florentine *contessa.* She developed a kind of phony accent, saying "wiz" for "with" and "weel you" for "will you," dragging canned Italian phrases like *"chi si loda, s'imbroda"* into her English by the neck until I had to remind her about the trouble with *"uomini"* and the wrong door. That cut her down to size. But the experience made her feel superior and continental and content with life for several days.

Most European languages are good only in their home territory and neighboring fringes. If, for example, a traveler is going to Spain and plans to spend considerable time there to the exclusion of other countries, then Spanish is by all means the language on which to concentrate. But it is useful practically nowhere in Europe outside of its own limited territory. Similarly with most others. The outstanding exceptions are French and German, which are, after English, the universal languages. A working knowledge of either is useful everywhere, French somewhat more so than German. Any educated European who is unable to converse in English can usually manage one of the other two, or both. French is the official, or

an official, language in four countries, France, Belgium, Luxembourg and Switzerland, while German is official in Germany, Austria, Luxembourg and Switzerland. The influence of these two large population blocs makes itself felt on most of the continent.

A good accent in any foreign language is a wonderful thing to acquire, if you can. Most people never do, and it is much more important to have a working vocabulary and a willingness to dive in and use the words until somebody catches on, even if you have to write what you are trying to say on a blackboard. While my own French accent was still much worse than it is, Elva and I stopped at a small village in France to ask the road to Verdun, which we knew was only about twenty miles away although we weren't sure of the direction.

An old gaffer in clogs who was sweeping the gutter quit work when I got out of the car. We exchanged conventional good mornings with no trouble at all. I asked him for directions to Verdun.

He said, "Where?"

I said, "Verdun," doing pretty nicely with the nasal n, or so it seemed to me.

"I never heard of it, monsieur."

"Everybody has heard of Verdun. It's the scene of a famous battle."

"I regret it, but I have never heard of it." He called another sweeper over. "Did you ever hear of—where was it you wanted to go, monsieur?"

"Verdun." I really clamped my nasal passages down on the n this time, and gargled the r good.

The second man shook his head. "I'm sorry, monsieur. Is it in France?"

I began to get worried. I knew they weren't just having fun

with me, but I couldn't figure out what was wrong. We were getting by perfectly well, no misunderstandings about who was saying what to whom, except that they had never heard of Verdun. I knew damn well the town was practically in sight from where we stood.

A small crowd had begun to gather, as *it* always *does*. I tried everybody within earshot, forgetting sentence structure and the conventions and simply repeating "Verdun? Verdun?" over and over again, rolling the *r* or clicking it or swallowing it and trying various nasals from "an" to "ahn" to "uhn" to "awn." I'll bet I pronounced Verdun every possible way it can be squeezed through the human nose and larynx, but nobody caught it Elva leaned out of the car and said, "Write it with your finger in the dust on the fender, and let's get going."

I didn't want to write it with my finger in the dust on the fender. I tried "Verdoon," the way I had learned it in school. Still no dice.

By this time women were leaning out of windows in the nearest houses, listening in. One of them shouted, "Maybe he means Verdun."

One of the sweepers shouted back, "No, no, it's some place in Alsace he wants. I've heard of it, but I *don't*—"

I yelled, "*She* said it!" and pointed at the woman in the window. "That's what I want! What the lady said! *That* place!"

The sweeper said blankly, "You mean Verdun?"

"Yes! That's what I *said!* Verdun!"

"Oh. Oh, well, straight down this road. You can't miss it."

He and the others walked away, shaking their heads and muttering "Verdun" to themselves, unbelievingly.

That was all there was to it, except that if I hadn't said "Verdun" exactly as they did at least eight times, I have an

untrained ear. But at least I was able to work at it until I got the information I wanted, which was better than what happened in Greece. And "Verdun" is an exceptionally tough one for anybody who learns French after the age of ten. You don't ordinarily have as much difficulty even when trying to ask your way from Cagnes to Cannes to Caen.

The ability to count and recognize numerical values in a foreign language is very valuable. Everybody buys something, if it is no more than a meal or a glass of beer, and if you don't know what the price means when it's thrown at you, you are stuck until somebody writes it out for you, sometimes still stuck even then. Continental written figures are frequently amazing until you learn them. A 4 is drawn 4, a 5 comes out 5, a 9 is 9, 8's can be almost anything, from 8 on up, a 1 is 1, and a 7 is the same thing with a crossbar, 7. If the crossbar is forgotten in the 7, you have an argument on your hands with the waiter which you can't win unless you are able to say "seven" and "one" understandably. Any adequate phrasebook contains a list of numbers from one to a hundred, with further instructions on how to continue from there. If you can't memorize the list in the language or languages which will be most useful to you in Europe, keep the phrasebook at hand in your pocket. Until you get used to hearing "*quatre-vingt-dix-neuf*" thrown at you frequently, it makes your head ache trying to figure out what four twenties and a ten and a nine add up to, and why a people as smart as the French haven't figured out some way to say it more simply, as the Belgians have. *Zweiundzwanzig* is no pipe at first, either.

Some phrasebooks, as well as many guidebooks and a few bilingual dictionaries, attempt to translate not only words but monetary values. These publications contain currency-conversion tables intended to help travelers calculate dollars-and-

cents equivalents for prices quoted in pounds or lire or marks or kroner. Because these tables are invariably based on official exchange rates, their conversion values are inaccurate in any circumstance where a traveler has acquired legitimate or illegitimate foreign currency at less than official prices. However, European moneys are generally so close to par on the free market today that this error is a small one in most cases, and besides even when the error is large you can always throw the converters away. They don't—or they needn't—cost anything. Practically everybody in the travel business gives one away for free; airlines, steamship lines, travel agencies, auto associations, oil companies, exchange houses. You can also buy them. Arithmetic being, as it is, an exact science, one kind of converter is as reliable as another.

You can even make your own. This is generally not worth the trouble, although the only out for a pennypincher who has made an advantageous purchase of free market money and wants, in writing, a ready translation of the cost of his lunch into something understandable and accurate in terms of dollars. The alternative is a mental operation by which you calculate what each peseta or Turkish lira or hundred francs has cost you, fix the figure in your mind, and multiply accordingly when the waiter hands you the tab. This calculation you can perform in your own language, figures being, as they are, the same in all countries as long as you can read them. There is a comforting thought for poor linguists in the observation that nobody, however fluent he becomes in a new language, can ever add or subtract as readily in that language as he does in his native arithmetic.

If a traveler is unable to learn anything at all about any European language except the equivalents for "Please" and "Thank you," these three words are invaluable. It is a Eu-

ropean convention to use them more frequently than they are used in the United States, as it is a European convention for both sexes to shake hands more frequently than Americans do. "Please" will stop most Europeans dead in their tracks to help a stranger, if necessary by leading the stranger to an interpreter, although "Hey, Mac" would bounce off them like hail from a suit of armor. "Thank you," with or without a tip to go with it, ends a conversation gracefully, particularly if you can remember which form of "Thank you" is appropriate in the circumstances. I learned so many "Thank you's" in Europe that when I was in a hurry to express appreciation for some gesture and couldn't think fast enough to sort through the collection, I threw them all in: *gracias, merci beaucoup, muito obrigado, evharistó, hvala lepa, dankeschön, grazie, takk*, much obliged and so on until my man was out of earshot. Elva, who fancies herself as pretty sharp in German, had a hard time adjusting to Vienna after several months in Spain. Instead of answering "*ja, ja*" when somebody asked her if she *sprecht Deutsch*, she kept saying "*si, si*" with a German accent, which made it come out, "*zee zee.*" The Viennese, who are linguists, were perfectly willing to talk any language she wanted, English, Spanish or German, but nobody could make head or tail out of "*zee zee.*" They thought she was tongue-tied.

An elementary reading knowledge of foreign languages, while not absolutely essential, is helpful, particularly to travelers getting around on their own with automobiles, bikes, scooters and other private vehicles. The international road-sign system in effect over most of free Europe utilizes symbols rather than words to convey instructions and warnings, but many other important directives are spelled out more or less clearly in print. Mostly less. After we had learned to cope

with *"Pazi na Vlak!!"* in Zagreb, it turned into *"Pazi na voz!!"* in Belgrade. Somewhat farther south, it was "ПАЗИ НА ВОЗ!!" And I had a terrible time finding my way to Piraeus with no more help than "ΠΕΙΡΑΙΩΣ" and an arrow on a Greek signpost. I do not suggest that any traveler should devote his life to memorizing the Greek and Cyrillic alphabets, but in parts of the Balkans these are used to the exclusion of the Roman alphabet. A phrasebook which explains them is a great help in those areas. Elsewhere in Europe, luckily for visitors, familiar block-letter ABC's have largely nosed out Gaelic, Turkish-Arabic, German Gothic and other strange scripts, at least on most public signboards, so that a traveler who sees one of the *"Verboten!"* signs the German authorities are so fond of need only figure out *what* is forbidden, then act accordingly. The phrasebook in his pocket, not his travel agent, is his best friend in these circumstances.

Motorists will find that in European cities they can buy phrasebooks which provide under one cover material in as many as four languages to help a traveler discuss intelligently things like tires, tubes, gas, oil and spare parts. These are useful aids to carry in the glove compartment. When you are dealing with technical matters like a broken shock absorber, a quick reference to the book saves you the trouble of bellying under the car with the mechanic and putting your finger on the break. In situations not involving technical matters like these, Americans in Europe will find that their English and a smattering of French will carry them through most countries. With a few words of German in hand as well, and five minutes with a phrasebook to memorize the elementary courtesies in a language appropriate to countries where English, French or German is not an official tongue, any traveler can get along wherever he goes.

A visitor will encounter several kinds of English in Europe. These are English English, American English, American English English, English American English, English dialect and American barroom. The first two are, respectively, what the average Englishman and American speaks in public, approximately the same except for accent—tomahto rather than tomayto. American English English is a rare sub-variety employed, imitatively, by people who picture Britons as Wodehouse characters with monocles in their eyes who go around muttering, "I say there, old bean," and, "Toodleoo, old pip," and, "Jolly frightful, what?"

English American English is the equivalent in reverse. It is encountered mainly in English novels involving American characters. Inasmuch as English novels about Americans are a form of amusement much more easily found on the continent and in the British Isles than equally entertaining American novels about Englishmen, a brief explanation is in order to explain how they may be recognized and understood.

In a typical English American English novel, Silas Q. Hamknuckle is an American millionaire in London. He is not a simple appleknocker with oats in his ears, as one might suspect, but a polished graduate of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He is on the trail of a gang of international crooks, for no particular reason except that the author can do eighty thousand words about it. He has hired, to help him, a tough and cynical American private eye who happens to be hanging around town, a Harvard boy named Hiram P. Satchelbag. (They always have middle initials.) Conversation between Si and Hi runs as follows:

Hi says, "I am shadowing these crooks when they duck into an hotel." (Ed. note: "An hotel," yet! From a hard-boiled American private eye!) "I follow them, and socko! I am

amongst a mob of tough boyos laying for me. I opine it is a trap."

Si says, "I reckon you thought you were for it, by gosh. What happened then? Put me wise, Hi."

"Well, sir, mighty lucky for me, I have a gun in my pocket. I outs with it and sings, 'Careful, you bozos! Little Willie here is primed for action. Stand back, or I'll let the daylight plumb through you!' "

"Bully for you! I reckon that made them back water mighty prompt. I see you have gotten off scot-free from your misadventure." (Ed. note: The use of "gotten" and "misadventure" in the same sentence by an M.I.T. man is not unusual.)

"I guess you're a mite hasty there, boss. I ambled out of that place in two shakes of a dog's tail, I can tell you. But whilst I am legging it, darned if one of them doesn't put a slug in my arm. I reckon I'll be in hospital overnight. So if you'll just excuse yours truly now—"

"Darned plucky of you, Hi. I shan't forget it. You're certain you will be up and about in the morning?"

"You can count on little old Hi, boss. I'll be around to knock you up for breakfast."

And more of the same. Any character who says "I reckon," "I opine," "Bully!" or "a mite hasty" is automatically an American. If he also uses terms like "whilst," "amongst," "in hospital," "shan't" and other anglicisms, he is speaking English American English.

English dialect is in a class by itself. I know very little about it. I drank a pint of mild-and-bitter in an English pub with two navvies from Somerset or Yorkshire or some such rural area, and the conversation we carried on was, to me at least, completely unintelligible. All I caught were the question marks at the end of certain sentences. The barman had to translate

what they were saying so I could answer them. I know of no way to communicate directly and understandably with a Somerset man unless you do it in writing.

American barroom is commonly and loudly utilized by about 25 per cent of American tourists, sailors and army occupation troops who forget that many Europeans and all other Americans and Englishmen within shouting distance understand what they are saying. I am fully aware of the counter-charges hurled at critics who comment unfavorably on the conduct of Our Boys abroad. Such critics are (a) Communists, (b) disloyal, (c) embittered expatriates, (d) liars, (e) overlooking the fact that Our Boys are prepared to defend the freedom of free Europe and the rest of the world with their blood, (f) hypercritical, (g) hypocritical, (h) dirty names. Some of the counter-charges are true, some false, but they are all irrelevant. The fact is that a small, vocal proportion of Americans abroad, in uniform and out, use language publicly they would never dream of trying to get away with in their home towns, without consideration for men, women or children within earshot and regardless of the fact that they, never the well-behaved 75 per cent, are the people who impress Europeans as representative Americans.

Few Americans are deliberately bad mannered on foreign soil. But many of them are careless about the way they talk and act when free from the restraint of their home environment, and their carelessness leaves a bad taste in European mouths. A European friend of mine, returning from her first visit to the United States, told me with mild surprise, "You know, Americans are *nice* when you meet them in their own homes. They hardly even swear." This was a compliment, although there is a sting in it. The fact that English is a useful auxiliary language in most parts of Europe means that *all*

English, not just the words you learn from a schoolbook, will be commonly understood and, in some cases, hotly resented. Since the resentment can manifest itself covertly in higher prices and poor service, or overtly with a bust in the bugle if the resenter is big enough and angry enough to manage this, it pays to be considerate.

Visitors to Europe who are fortunate enough to speak the language of the country they are in with reasonable fluency will invariably have a better time, see more, get better prices, and come back with more pleasant memories than others. There is no getting around it. English will do as a *lingua franca,* but the native tongue is a key to any country. It is one of the reasons why Great Britain is so popular with American tourists. In spite of the dialectical difficulties he may encounter in the hinterlands, an American in London will recognize on all sides names as familiar to him as Dickens and Shakespeare; Piccadilly, Old Bond Street, Westminster Abbey, Hyde Park, Leicester Square, St. Paul's, Charing Cross. He can talk turkey with salesmen, put intelligent questions about ways to beat the purchase tax, and compare prices as soon as he solves the English monetary system, a job which is practically impossible for anyone who can't pronounce thruppence correctly. He can also argue politics, appreciate jokes, flirt with the girls, ask directions in the subway, read a newspaper without difficulty, and use the telephone. All this makes for enjoyable travel.

So it is with a visitor who can speak more than elementary Italian in Italy, more than elementary French in France, more than elementary *deutsch* in Deutschland, more than elementary something else somewhere else. Any traveler who intends to spend a great deal of his time in one country, or make repeated visits to it, or do business in it, should crack his skull to build as sound a working knowledge of that country's lan-

guage as he can in the time available to him, to the exclusion of other languages and other spare-time activities.

If this seems to be too obvious even to require a recommendation, I mention it because I am acquainted with an ambassador who has represented his government in a foreign country for twenty-five years without learning that country's language, or trying to. He is not popular, and I am sure the natives clip him whole-heartedly whenever the opportunity arises, on principle. Here his lack of familiarity with the language costs him hard cash, and since it is the purpose of this handbook to preclude situations in which a traveler will be required to lay out any more hard cash than an inescapable minimum, I will continue from the general to the specific with a further recommendation that travelers who do not propose to commit themselves to one particular country, but rather intend to see Europe as a whole, bone up on their French, first and foremost. Not only because French is still at least as important an auxiliary language as English in all countries, but because some knowledge of it is a handy thing for any visitor to take with him to Paris, a city which all travelers must visit at least once before they make the final, inevitable, one-way trip in another direction.

There are many more reasons for visiting Paris than to admire the architecture of *l'église de Notre Dame* or those cute little pancakes who model fig leaves in the cabarets off the Place Pigalle. I will discuss a few of the other advantages, material ones, in the chapter which follows.

# 10

## PARIS: AS AN END, AND AS A BEGINNING

*Why Paris, first and foremost. Why and how Paris and other Big Towns will bankrupt visitors who go there in season instead of to beach or mountain resorts. The profitable use of free French francs to finance travel in other countries. The French good-buy list, with reasons why it is limited. The author's wife comes in contact with French* haute couture, *suffering a nervous breakdown. A general discussion of the European souvenir and good-buy markets, together with excellent arguments for shopping in some countries rather than in others. Procedures for shading prices by buying in duty-free areas. Shannon, Andorra and Gibraltar. Which goods to buy elsewhere in Europe, and with which money, and how to acquire the spending-lettuce. A simple but effective method for haggling prices down to reasonable levels.*

My own feeling about Paris is undoubtedly colored by the fact that it was there I first sipped the heady wine of fame.

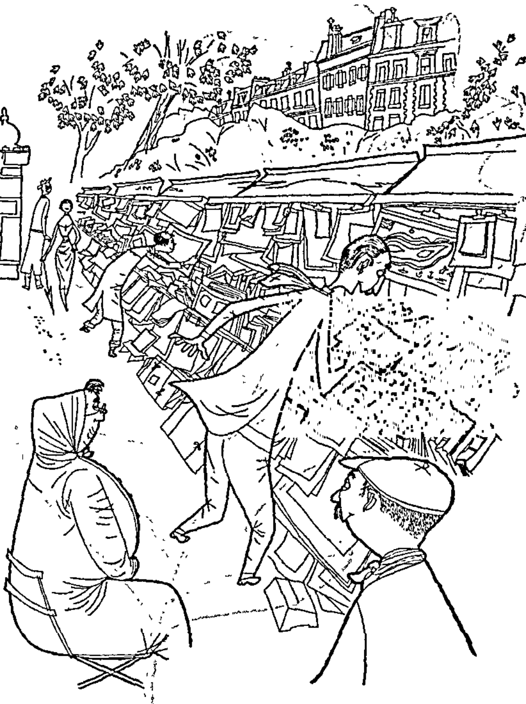
It happened on a bright spring morning. Spring is springier in Paris than elsewhere, and what with chestnut trees bursting into green leaf everywhere, an invitation to a lunch that somebody else was going to pay for, and an unexpected check from home in my pocket, I felt pretty good. I was mousing along the bookstalls on the left bank of the river when I came to a bin of dog-eared volumes under a sign which read "*100 francs la pièce.*" I stopped to explore the bin for valuable first editions which might be turned over at a profit.

I found none. However, I did see copies of the works of Shakespeare, Goethe, Molière, Balzac and other well-known literary figures. Right in the middle of this company, cheek-and-jowl with a collection of short stories written by a Chinese friend of mine named Y. T. and practically sitting in Madame Bovary's lap, I found one of my own books. Somebody had scrawled "*Merde!*" on the flyleaf, which is not the most favorable critical reaction an author can ask for in France. But it did not spoil my moment of triumph. When a writer reaches the point in his career where his works sell for 100 francs in the second-hand bookstalls on the left bank of the Seine, he has arrived.

The bookstalls along the Seine are only one of the many unique attractions of Paris. If I were writing an orthodox guidebook, I would take time out to do twenty thousand words on the Louvre and Notre Dame and Sainte Chapelle and the Arc de Triomphe and the Champs-Élysées and the Madeleine and the Place Vendôme and St. Germain des Prés and the *bateaux mouches* and the Place de la Concorde and Fouquet's and the Tour Eiffel and Montmartre and the Folies Bergère and the Tuileries and the Luxembourg Gardens, and the restaurants and the food and the wine and the absolutely

stunning women you see in the street and the smell of roasting chestnuts on a nippy fall evening and the taste of onion soup and freshly baked bread at Les Halles at five o'clock of a summer morning and the blood-thirsty cab drivers and the pleasure of taking coffee at a sidewalk café and other aspects of Paris which make it the queen of all cities. But that kind of writing has been done already, hundreds of times, and it is the function of this handbook to indicate how a traveler can get the most value for a given investment, not to tout one metropolis over another. I will only state an opinion that there is no city like Paris in the world, and while it is no bargain basement for visitors, it is nevertheless the heart and soul of Europe. Anybody who has an opportunity to tick away a few of his limited number of heartbeats in Paris and doesn't jump at the chance might just as well spend his vacation in bed reading the funny papers. In fact, there is so much to be seen and experienced in and near Paris that a visitor with no more than a couple of weeks to spare might just as well spend his time there trying—vainly—to exhaust the charms of the city. It is true that he will have to go home and confess that he failed to visit beauty spots like Venice and Canterbury. But he will at least have had two unhurried weeks to explore the capital of France, than which there is nothing more thoroughly enjoyable unless it is twenty years doing the same thing, and if he does it during the peak of the tourist season he will have learned—the hard way—one of the inescapable truths of all travel; namely, that if you visit the metropolises in mid-summer you are going to pay, and pay, and pay.

This is a matter of interest to the budget-minded traveler even if he can't do anything about it. Most American families, like most European families, must take their vacations during the summertime because of the school-holiday situation. A large number of both groups, including those who live in Big



Towns, head immediately for other Big Towns; Paris, London, Rome, Madrid, Brussels, to name a few. The cost of living in any Big Town is generally higher than elsewhere, and when its seams are bulging with visitors prices go even higher. Some of it is profiteering, some simply the facts of life about metropolitan areas. Travelers stuck with a summer-holiday-or-else program will find that vacations away from the Big Towns can be arranged at a much lower cost than the findable minimum for a stay in the metropolises, and the farther the traveler gets from metropolises the bigger the price differential; one-half, or one-third, or one-fourth as expensive. Travelers who can choose the time of year for their holidays will find costs in the Big Towns a little better, not much but some, during "off-season" than during the crush. And, to repeat an earlier opinion, nobody, even if he has to do it at the very peak of the crush, should fail to visit Paris at least once in his lifetime.

In speaking this way about Paris I do not mean to minimize the attractions of Vienna, Stockholm, Venice, Florence, Rome, Istanbul, Geneva, Berne, Copenhagen, The Hague, Amsterdam, Delft, Madrid, Seville, Lisbon, London, Dublin or any of many other beautiful cities well worth more than a quick visit. Paris simply has more to offer than any two or three of them. It is the hub of European travel for anybody who has the time, money and inclination to go farther. For this reason, it is an excellent point from which to begin a European tour.

All international planes, train and bus lines converge on Paris, and sea travelers are whisked from or to Le Havre by boat-trains which make the trip in a few hours. All major and many minor travel agencies and European national tourist bureaus have offices in Paris. Because non-residents can spend French francs at par in France for international as well as intranational transportation, if they go about it according to instructions, and French francs often available on the open mar-

ket at a discount are freely importable into the country, some saving on the transportation cost of a European tour may be had by purchasing tickets in Paris. (Paris also offers the Place Pigalle.) In France, alone of European countries, a foreigner can buy and resell, without fearful red tape, an automobile, for francs or for dollars, and the maximum duty-free driving period which France grants to purchasers of automobiles for export or resale is the longest in Europe, eighteen months. The documents issued by French automobile associations will take an automobile, motorcycle or gasoline scooter across any border in free Europe with a bare minimum of red tape, and bring it back again. Paris stands in the middle of one of the finest networks of paved roads in the world. A visitor can wander afield as far as he likes from that point, but if he prefers not to wander far, French food, wines, beaches, mountains, cathedrals, museums, art galleries, gambling casinos, sports and entertainments are already too well publicized to require further comment by me.

Finally, the cost of everything in France is currently so high, relative to most of the rest of Europe, that a traveler should begin his trip there because French prices will not kill him after American prices. They may, in fact, appear fairly reasonable to anyone fresh from the United States, while a traveler who has just come from Austria or Spain will suffer so much from the disproportionately high cost of living in France that he won't be able to enjoy himself at all. There are dozens of arguments for beginning a European tour in Paris, none at all against it, except the fact that a visitor who arrives in July or August will find that most Parisians have hauled out for beach or mountain resorts, closing up shop, with peculiar French logic, in the middle of their best selling season and leaving the city to tourists who have gone there to buy clothes, jewelry and whatnot and can't find a place to spend their dough.

This is a silly move on the part of the shopkeepers, but a good things for the tourists, financially speaking. Paris, as well as most of the rest of France, is murder on shoppers.

A number of European guidebooks contain sections on good buys for the visitor. Where France is involved the list is often unusually long, particularly in regard to items which are designed for ornamentation of the female frame and fixtures. France produces some of the loveliest luxury goods in the world to hang on a dame—perfume, *haute couture*, jewelry, gloves, handbags, hats, lingerie. These things and others like them on the French market are world famous, justifiably so The sight of a good-looking French doll tripping along the Champs Élysées done up in her Sunday best will knock most normal American males for a row of *prises d'eau*, or French fireplugs. Some wives I know, naming no names, are inclined to say, "Humph! *I* could look like that myself if you weren't so tight-fisted," but husbands should never fall for this argument. In the first place most wives couldn't match a Frenchwoman's natural-born *chic* in a million years, given an unlimited amount of money to spend on themselves. In the second place, practically everything sold in France—there are a few exceptions, which I will name—can be bought more economically in some other European country.

Here I am not talking about the purchase of transportation, or two weeks at a Riviera beach resort, or a tour of the Loire *château* country, or food and drink, or a wonderful vacation in a wonderful country. Nobody should hesitate to toss in the blue chips for carnal pleasure in France. It offers plenty for the money in this respect. I am referring now strictly to the acquisition of portable material possessions—clothing, shoes, luggage, jewelry, toothpaste, all the other things the traveler did not buy in the United States because he may have

listened to recommendations about taking off with nothing more than a toothbrush and two Dacron shirts, or otherwise gained the impression that things are cheaper in Europe than in the United States. They are. But not necessarily in the French part of Europe.

There are few true good buys in any country which sells things at higher prices than those for which equivalent articles can be purchased in the country next door. A traveler who is going no farther than France will of course spend all his money happily in that country and go home broke but with tangible French loot as well as fond memories. Here the guidebook's good-buy list is useful. It reflects a comparison of value with value in a given currency. But Europe is still a knot of competitive economies, not just one, and a traveler who is going to visit several countries will be badly stung if he loads up on the basis of the good-buy list for a high-cost country without bearing in mind that over-all price levels in the next country may be half as high.

The *only* real bargains to be had in any country fall into one of two classes. These are, first, souvenirs: native handicraft, dolls, indigenous art and other pieces of *típica* which are unique to that country, cannot be found in any other country except as imports, and should therefore be bought, if at all, in the area where they are produced because the price there, whatever it may be, is the best price available. The second group consists of genuine good buys: articles of value which are not unique but, for a given quality and quantity, cheaper in one country than in another. In the souvenir group, any traveler buys whatever strikes his fancy if he can afford it. There are many lovely souvenirs to be found in France, as in all countries. The French good-buy list includes only perfumes, cognac, contemporary painting, and, according to my

wife, Scandale girdles. Nothing else. Not even what is probably the most famous single French product, its *haute couture.* Particularly not *haute couture.*

In a moment of temporary insanity which followed the arrival of the unexpected check and the discovery that my books were being lumped with those of Shakespeare, Molière, Balzac and Y. T. in the French second-hand market, I gave Elva $500 worth of francs and told her to go blow herself to a Paris wardrobe. Never having had that much money to play with before, she headed for the *haute couture* like a bee to the honey pot, carrying a list of what she wanted: a "basic black" (this is what women call an inexpensive plain black dress which is so inexpensive and plain that they have to spend another hundred dollars every couple of weeks for incidental ornaments to go with it), stockings, lingerie, a blouse, a bag, a hat. I heard about the shopping trip when she crept back later, fresh from the *salon* of one of the more famous French *couturiers.*

"Where is the fine frippery?" I asked.

"Where it originated." She took the roll of bills, intact, out of her purse and tossed it at me. "Here. Go buy yourself a glass of beer."

There was a strange, glassy glint in her eyes. I asked, "What happened?"

"I tried on a model. A basic black. Three and one-half yards of material. It was nice and plain and I could have done things with it. Do you know what the price was?"

"You've got to expect to pay more than $25 in Paris even for a plain dress, sugar. With five hundred to fritter away—"

"Six hundred and fifty dollars they wanted! Reduced from $850!" Her voice went up to a kind of frightened squeal. "For a basic black!"

She kept trembling and twitching and muttering to herself

for a couple of days, but finally recovered enough to reclaim the five hundred and shoot $125 of it on a raincoat, so help me, that I later saw duplicated down to the last seam in New York for $49.50. I do not suggest that the raincoat lacked style and flair, or that it did not keep the rain out. But for $125, any woman would be thoroughly soaked before she even put it on.

French *couturiers* have managed to lift their prices to such astronomical heights that even their own steady customers are deserting them. Italian stylists in Rome, Florence and Milan get much of the trade, produce creations just as lovely as the French models, and sell them at prices which, while stiff enough, are still beneath French prices. Spanish *couturiers* who operate in Madrid and Barcelona sell, in Spain, French-styled clothes at even less than Italian prices. They have the style, the flair, the tailoring. They cost less, and they have different names on the label. Middle-income Frenchwomen who have an opportunity to do so load up with clothes in New York, not in Paris. These are ready-mades, but the best ready-mades in the world, copied from French originals and reasonably priced. France is not a place to go bargain-hunting for *haute couture*, or, for that matter, anything else. You either pay plenty for the best, or save your money to buy equally attractive models in Italy and Spain at lower prices.

About the things which are really worth buying in France, I will dismiss Scandale girdles with the remark that I never tried one on. They look kind of cute when properly filled, and my wife says they are the best in the world, at any price. In regard to works of art, Paris has always been the world center for art students, and some very creditable contemporary canvases are on sale in the galleries of the Rue de Seine and adjoining streets on the Left Bank. You have to satisfy your own taste about what to buy, but the prices are very fair. A lot of the paintings are going to increase in value as their

creators become famous, although this does not constitute a written guarantee that your money will be cheerfully refunded if they do not.

American residents returning from Europe may import only one bottle of any perfume that has a trademark registered in America. It can be a large bottle at a reasonable price for French perfume, however. The traveler may also take, or send along ahead of him, or drag after him, any number of bottles of non-trademarked scent. Since the basic elements of all French perfumes originate in or near the town of Grasse, in Provence, not far from Cannes, flower-essence distillers in Grasse make their own blends and sell them, directly as well as through perfumeries, at ridiculous prices, currently a little more than two dollars an ounce for small quantities, a little less than that price for larger purchases at the distillery. These aren't the famous blends, and the salesgirl is kidding you when she says, "This one smells exactly like Chanel Number 5, *n'est-ce pas?*" It doesn't. Not exactly, anyway. But it smells good, which is what a perfume is supposed to do, and the girl will mail sealed aluminum flasks of it, holding up to twelve ounces, to wherever you are willing to pay postage. If you make sure that the perfume contains no alcohol, which can't (at least in theory) be sent to the United States this way, and have the packages marked with (a) a value of not more than $10, (b) "Unsolicited Gift," and (c) "May Be Opened For Inspection," they will slide through customs at the U. S. end free of duty—if you haven't lied about the value. This is a wonderful way to put yourself away with friends at home while keeping baggage weight down. You can do the same thing with other gifts from other countries, and there is no limit to the total you can send to a pal, provided it doesn't run to more than $10 a day and is "unsolicited" (hah!).

The returning traveler can take only a gallon of French

cognac with him to the United States, hardly a drop in the bucket. He can't mail a supply along ahead, either. However, he can drink a lot of it while it is within reach, and carry a few bottles with him when he crosses the next border. The good stuff, V.S.O.P. and better, sells for from one-third to one-half of what it costs in the U. S. A. Ordinary three-star brandies go as low as two-fifty a bottle or thereabouts when you ignore French advertising razzmatazz and look for untouted kinds in a *cave* which stocks everything available instead of maintaining a side line of a few name brands. One three-star cognac is about as good as another, advertising claims notwithstanding. Actually cognac is a souvenir, since it is unique to France. But because other, inferior types of brandy are produced in other countries, cognac can also be regarded as a good buy.

These are about the only tangible takeaway bargains in France. A traveler in that country should spend his money mainly on the fleshpots—good food, good wine, a good time in a good land. When he runs short of cash, he can pop over to Spain to recoup. And buy things.

Spain, for all its popularity with the tourist trade and the local price distortions which result from any rush to a crowded market, remains, with Austria and Greece, in Europe's lowest cost bracket for visitors. Extremely low Spanish wage levels keep domestic prices down, and some imports, like American cigarettes, often sell for less in Spain than they do in the land of their manufacture. Spanish *haute couture* from Madrid and Barcelona has already been mentioned, and in those same cities very good Spanish tailors will make an excellent suit to your own style, male or female, for around $40, a topcoat for $35, tailored slacks for $10 or $12. Because Spain is not a manufacturing nation, the traveler will not find there the wealth of manufactured articles available in Italy, Switzerland

and Sweden, for example, and such ready-made goods as exist are often inferior (always excepting unique and beautiful Spanish handicraft souvenirs, like Toledo gold-and-steel work). But a dollar at current exchange has considerably more value in Spain than in most other parts of Europe.

The dollar has even greater value in Andorra, a neighboring small co-principality in the Pyrenees which is accessible only by road or mountain footpath and therefore does not get as much business from Americans as it ought to. It does, however, receive a large influx of visitors from and through France when its single connecting road is not blocked by snow, as it is for five months of the year, and a steady flood of year-round pilgrims through Spain. The reason for this is that Andorra has no customs house, which makes its imports free of duty, and it sells those imports at the lowest prices to be found on the continent. Both France and Spain permit Andorra to truck in, tax-free, quantities of American cigarettes, French perfumes and cognacs, Swiss watches, German cameras, Scotch tweeds and whiskey, English brogans, Spanish wines, Italian silks, Swedish crystal, Norwegian furs and tons of other luxury goods. These are then sold back to the Americans, French, Swiss, Germans, Scotch, English, Spaniards, Italians, Swedes and Norwegians who come to Andorra to buy the goods at lower prices than they would pay at home. Otherwise Andorra offers mostly scenery and its own tobacco, one-quarter of which is consumed locally, one-quarter of which is legally exported to France, and one-half of which is illegally smuggled into Spain. Both Spanish pesetas and French francs are legal tender in Andorra, and both currencies can be legally purchased there at free market rates although the same transaction a foot over the border in either direction is illegal.

Portugal is a medium-level country—not as cheap as Spain, not as expensive as France, not a manufacturing nation and

mentioned here not because it ranks after Spain on the cost ladder, which it doesn't, but because it is next door to Spain geographically. It has, for a poor country, a hard and stable currency which makes it difficult even for an expert to gain anything through exchange-gimmicking with escudos. However, it is the second best European country, after Switzerland, in which to load up with other free-market currencies, so foreign money qualifies as a good buy in Portugal. Nothing much else does, for a traveler who is going to cover extensive territory. Swiss watches may be had there at prices not quite as good as they are in Switzerland. Portuguese gold and silver filigree is excellent, but since precious metals have a standard value everywhere, only the fine Portuguese workmanship is unique. This puts Portuguese filigree in the souvenir class. Portuguese men's shoes are very good. Most Portuguese cork products, sometimes listed as good buys, really qualify as souvenirs, except for the corks you pull out of port bottles. Visitors who like the taste of port can arrange a really magnificent free load at any of several Portuguese [illegible].

Elva and I knocked on the door of one of these establishments in Oporto and said we would like to examine the premises, please. The man who diligently guided us through the cellars and bottling sheds spoke English, Spanish and French much better than we spoke Portuguese, so we got an understandable explanation of the [illegible] process, [illegible] a number of samples.

"This is an ordinary ruby port," the guide said, [illegible] a couple of sorts of [illegible] 1915. "We'll get to the better wines later."

We said, "How nice," and [illegible].

"A fair [illegible] port," he said [illegible] filling the glasses again. [illegible]

I said, "[illegible]" [illegible]

"A rather decent tawny port," he remarked shortly after that, watching us shoot it down. He wasn't a drinking person himself, apparently.

"Yeh, man!"

"An excellent white port," he said, minutes later.

"You ain't kidding, brother," Elva said, putting it away with the others.

"This is a real vintage wine," he said about the next one. "Roll it around in your mouths before swallowing. It releases the bouquet."

"Bouquet-shmouquet," Elva said rosily, blowing a stray lock of hair out of her eyes and hiccuping at the same time. "Any old port in a storm, hey?"

It wasn't funny, but it struck us both as a remarkably witty thing to say. We were still snickering about it when the tour ended with a final shot of the best in the house and we walked out of the last cool warehouse into the open, where the hot summer sun could get in its dirty work.

It was just like running into a lamppost. Elva gave a sigh, sat down on a bench, and passed out. Like that. I didn't quite go under myself, but the next half-hour was very hazy. I remember insisting to the guide that we talk Portuguese, rather than something else I knew better, because Portuguese *is* a mushy language in which most s sounds are properly pronounced sh. I was aware that this gave me an advantage of accent, while if I tried to thank him in English I would inevitably say that we had shertainly enjoyed his courteshy and the *hoshpitality* of the houshe, making him think we *were* a couple of rum-bums. I had to burn feathers under Elva's nose to bring her back to life when it was time to go. And if anybody chooses to wonder about the injection of a Portuguese drinking bout into a discussion of good buys of tangible portable property, the hangover that rode us for the rest of the day

was the most tangible thing we ever carried anywhere. Beware of port in large quantities.

Madeira is another treacherous wine. It is also a Portuguese island off the mainland of Africa and therefore not strictly speaking a part of Europe. However, Madeira is mentioned here because it, with its neighboring Spanish Canaries, offers American visitors an almost unique summer vacation bargain. These attractive sub-tropical islands are popular winter resorts with Europeans, most particularly the English, but relatively unpatronized during the summer months. This reverses the ordinary off-season, high-season rate situation, and makes hotel charges and living costs on the islands, as well as transportation costs to them from England or the continent, lowest during the summer, when most Americans travel.

Austria boasts, with cause, of hotel and *pension* charges that have not changed since 1951, and manufactures some of the finest high-quality, low-cost leather work in Europe; not only souvenirs like beautiful *lederhosen* that nobody in his right mind would ever wear publicly once he has left the country but genuine good buys in handcrafted (and too heavy, for air travelers) luggage, leather jackets, purses and such. Actually no specific good-buy list is necessary for Austria, because all things Austrian are good buys at today's good prices. A traveler in that country need only look over the counters for whatever he wants that he hasn't found in Spain and that he won't find as a particular bargain special to the next country, as in the case of watches in Switzerland, cameras in Germany, or perfumes in France. Skiers and other winter-sports enthusiasts will find the Austrian Alps one of the cheapest, as well as one of the most beautiful, places in which to ply their equipment, and to buy it and the warm clothes which are a necessary adjunct to any sport involving physical contact with quantities of ice and snow. There are plenty of operas, con-

certs, music festivals and *gemütlichkeit* for non-athletic visitors.

In Austria as in Spain, prevailing low price levels attract a heavy crowd of visitors during the summer months. The further attraction of Austrian winter sports makes that country a popular tourist playground in the winter as well. This fact, coupled with Austria's economic recovery, has strengthened Austrian money to a point where there is no longer any profit in fishing for free-market schillings on the Swiss *bourse*, or anywhere else. However, Viennese insurance companies are obliging about taking bets on the weather in European summer resort centers under the new and increasingly popular "raincheck" policies, and a rainy vacation need not be an unmitigated catastrophe for holiday makers. This kind of insurance against a rain-out—one family collected a thousand-dollar jackpot for an investment of $50—is a genuine good buy. Whether it pays off or not, you are sure to enjoy your summer.

Another good shopping country is Ireland. With the devaluation of the English and Irish pounds some years ago, prices in both countries began to rise. The Irish have been more successful than the English in checking inflationary trends, and the $2.80 pound in Ireland now buys considerably more in the way of fine Irish tweeds, whiskey and good food than the $2.80 pound in England will buy in the way of fine Scotch tweeds, whiskey and indifferent food. Besides this differential, Ireland also has the Shannon airfield, a free port bulging with goodies at tax-free prices that will knock a visitor's eye out; Scotch, Irish and Kentucky whiskeys, German cameras, American cigarettes, French perfumes and cognac, English cashmeres, Havana cigars, not to mention tons of Irish lace, shillelaghs, billycock hats and Sweepstake tickets. The saddest sacks in the world are those travelers who have spent all their shopping money for luxury goods on the con-

tinent, then fly home by way of a Shannon stopover and are forced to sit for forty-five minutes in a waiting room hung with free-port price lists for the identical merchandise they have bought. I have known this experience to sour whole lifetimes, and I strongly urge all skinflints who can arrange it to fly to Europe by way of Shannon, look over the layout and the price lists, then either buy what attracts them right off or arrange to go back the same way so they can get a dip at the duty-free goods with whatever money they have left. Theoretically, the bundles of whiskey, cigars and other loot you lug back to the plane go against your free-weight allowance, which may already be overloaded with other baggage, but as a matter of practice the steward looks the other way when you bring the stuff aboard, and will generally continue to look the other way if you don't leave it in the aisle where he can stub his toe on it.

Gibraltar is not a free port, [illegible]
tax system makes imports very [illegible]
ble in Gibraltar except fish and Barbary apes is an import, it is a good place to shop, particularly for British goods and Spanish pesetas spendable on the mainland. Gibraltar prints its own pounds, which can be had at a discount on free-money markets but are importable in limited quantities only.

While still in the pound-sterling area, visitors should remember that England offers unique attractions to Americans. London is an experience nobody should miss. Theatergoing travelers will find themselves at home there, at bargain prices. Most Broadway hits do a stand in London sooner or later, at considerably less than Broadway rates. No gouging by ticket scalpers, either, and no trouble getting seats when you want them. You can see a performance by any of several of the best Shakespearian repertory troupes in the world for twice the price of a movie, less than half of what a ticket for the same

play would set you back in Pittsburgh, and tea is served in the stalls during the matinee instead of popcorn, thus minimizing the maxillary static which interferes with proper reception of the spoken line in some other entertainment areas. Music-hall performers, crooners, comedians, high-wire walkers, acrobats, burlesque queens and trained seals perform in London at prices which make it a first-nighter's paradise all year round. And there are no language difficulties.

Good, new, small automobiles may be purchased at a reasonable price in England, but for export only. They may not normally be resold in England, and their duty-free driving period in that country is one year. The same models, duty-free to non-residents for eighteen months, are obtainable in France, can be taken back across the Channel by visitors with French *carnets de passage*, and may be resold in France, although French cars have a higher resale value and are easier to dispose of. The purchase for export of an English car in England requires either a guarantee that the car will be exported within a year, or a cash deposit equal to the purchase tax which will apply otherwise. The guarantee, obtainable from car sellers, is preferable to the deposit. An alternative is to pay for a surety bond against the purchase tax, which is a sheer waste of money. There are fewer formalities to cope with in countries which do not impose purchase taxes.

The English purchase tax is, luckily, one of the easiest of all such imposts for a traveler to beat on articles less weighty than automobiles. Otherwise most things for sale in England would be as far out of sight for visitors as they are for the English themselves. Basically, the tax is a government bite added, at percentages that run up to 75 per cent of wholesale, to the price of those articles which are already so expensive that no one can afford them anyway. Cheaper goods that everyone buys are tax-free, and between maximum and zero tax brackets

there are a number of different classifications which are as difficult to understand as the former system of "utility" (non-taxable) and "non-utility" (taxable) goods which has been done away with. Fortunately for American visitors, the law grants them what amounts to an exemption on all purchases costing five quid or more, $14. Providing the transient traveler is willing to spend at least that amount at a whack, all he has to do when buying taxable articles is arrange with the seller to have the goods shipped either to his American home address or to the carrier which will take him away from England's shores. On this kind of transaction, the tax does not apply. Some stores specialize in this trade, some do not, so a buyer asks first before unlatching his billfold. It used to be possible for visitors in England to obtain tax-exemption certificates with sterling exchange bought for dollars at a bank, then use the certificates to avoid tax on purchases of goods intended for consumption in England. Since this type of transaction is what the purchase tax was invented for, exemption certificates have been abandoned.

The purchase tax does not apply to second-hand goods. While a second-hand bottle of whiskey is not of much use to anyone after the original purchaser has finished with it, I never heard of a pair of emerald earrings being refused because some girl might have worn them for a while before a second girl received them as a gift. Jewelry buyers should bear this in mind.

Emerald earrings included and purchase tax excluded, most English products are expensive, by European standards. Facial tissues, which run as high as $2 a box on some parts of the continent, are a notable exception. Otherwise there are few true good buys in Great Britain. But since a souvenir is, by definition, something unique to a given country and not obtainable elsewhere at a better price, those luxury items which

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are distinctively British—fine golf clubs, the incomparable Savile Row tailoring, Burberrys, Aquascutums, Argyle socks, bench-made brogues, cashmere sweaters and similar articles which show up as imports in Fifth Avenue men's shops—are a far better investment in London than at home. They aren't cheap, but they are as cheap as you can get those particular quality goods anywhere. London is a high-cost, high-grade men's-wear town, as Paris is a high-cost, high-grade ladies'-wear town. Poor boys will do better to have their tweeds hand-tailored in Ireland or Austria or Spain, or load up on good ready-to-wear in Switzerland.

Switzerland was the most expensive country in Europe only a few years ago. It has not grown any cheaper. But because it has a very stable economy, its cost-of-living rise has not been as pronounced as the rises in other countries, notably Belgium, France, Germany and Great Britain. As a result, Switzerland is now settling back into the middle-cost group, and will probably continue to improve its relative position in the near future. At this writing, it produces excellent ready-to-wear clothes for male and female customers at very fair prices, as well as the best watches in the world in all price ranges, other precision machinery, pretty good nylon stockings, the best women's shoes available in Europe, antibiotics, vitamin pills, drugs, contraceptives, knives, scissors, moving-picture projectors and practically every other small article which calls for manufacturing skill and know-how, including excellent American-type cigarettes and American-keyboard portable typewriters that read QWERTYUIOP on the top row of keys instead of something foreign and unintelligible.

Switzerland is also the best place in Europe to buy foreign currency, which can be dealt in freely at any bank and most travel agencies. Its own money is hard, free and positively ungimmickable. It is a beautiful country, full of Alps, fast trains

and fantastically honest people, so much so that a professional skinflint has no real chance to use his acquired skills and leaves the country feeling frustrated because of it.

I have had Swiss cab-drivers argue me out of paying the fare shown by the meter because they were not entitled to charge the meter fare for a single passenger, and once Kendal nearly got into a beef with a Swiss news vendor because the comic book he was selling said it cost 30 centimes whereas *he* said it cost only 20 centimes and if Kendal wanted to give him 30 centimes for it, it was O.K. with him but she was a *dummkopf* if she did. At any price level, a buyer gets solid value in Switzerland.

Liechtenstein is an adjunct to Switzerland and sells, for Swiss francs, only souvenirs—stamps and things. No good buys. Italy, another neighbor, is itself a manufacturing nation. It produces almost everything tangible that France can produce, not counting cognac, the best perfumes and Scandale girdles, at a lower price level. *Haute couture,* for any traveler who is willing to lay money on the line to decorate his women, is a better deal in Florence, Milan and Rome than anywhere in France. Italian silks in particular, woolens, lingerie, shirts, neckties, leather goods, traveling irons, gasoline scooters, automobiles, bikes, typewriters and what-have-you are as good as they come. Italy isn't cheap, but on the other hand it isn't brutally expensive, and its cookery, wine, cheese, hospitality and service standards rank with the very best. Italy has Gina Lollobrigida and a number of other natural assets, including one of the best bus systems in Europe, plenty of opera at cut rates, a tremendous collection of Renaissance art, its own Riviera, and some startlingly beautiful scenery marred by some of the damnedest garish roadside advertising signs on the continent. It is, with France, one of the two most popular tourist countries, and for good reasons. Vatican

City, which it encloses, is the capital of the Catholic world, and San Marino, an independent republic about the size of a dime, similarly enclosed, is Communist. Both Vatican City and San Marino can be visited without charge or formality, but San Marino offers nothing much except political arguments and a non-functioning gambling casino, while in Vatican City you can see not only the Sistine Chapel but the Michelangelo *Pietà*, one of the four finest single pieces of sculpture in existence to at least one amateur critic. But here I am again encroaching on the field of the guidebooks, and will say no more about the *Pietà* except that a visitor can look at it for nothing.

One of the best buys in Italy is gasoline. This has already been mentioned elsewhere, but with European gas prices as rough as they are it is worth mentioning again. Through the AAA in this country, the Italian national tourist bureau and the Automobile Club of Italy in that country, motorists can buy coupons which cut gas prices by about a third.

North and east of Venice is Trieste, now under Italian management and no more a bone of contention with Yugoslavia. It is still not an integral part of Italy, strictly speaking, but its money and price levels are Italian, and there is nothing in the shopping field to distinguish it from the rest of the country except its own souvenirs, with the Trieste *fleur-de-lys* on them, plus some extraordinarily good shrimp which qualify as a good buy around mealtimes.

Germany is once again the industrial leader of Europe, and one of the few countries in which the cost-of-living index has dropped during the past couple of years. This compensates to some extent for the decreased value of the dollar in relationship to the deutschmark, which has become one of the hardest currencies in all of Europe, practically as sound as the Swiss franc, and for that reason is no longer obtainable at a discount on the free market, worse luck for visitors. But

even at par it is a good money with which to buy those luxury manufactures for which Germany is famous—cameras, optical instruments and fine steelware. The German Volkswagen is one of the best and most popular low-priced cars in Europe, and the traveler will find other genuine good buys in many smaller precision-made manufactures. The Kurfürstendamm in Berlin is as tempting a street for window shopping as Europe offers, and as good a place as any to invest spare funds in cameras, light meters, binoculars and such, the best in Europe and at the best available prices. But prices are about the same throughout the rest of Germany, so a side trip to Berlin is not essential simply for shopping.

German night clubs, notably in Berlin, are cheap, numerous and enjoyable. Berliners are great hands for night clubbing. I took Elva to a Berlin roof garden one evening for dinner, ate well, drank well, danced, ogled the girls of the floor show, listened to a cowboy crooner in a pair of hair pants that would have bogged a lawnmower sing "On Top of Old Smoky" in German, and got off for a tag of $9, including a small bite we had to pay to get through the door. Alternatively, you can coast through the evening for the entry fee and the price of a beer.

The only thing to look out for in German night clubs is an empty chair at your table. Some sea gull is liable to sit down with you just because it is empty, the way sea gulls do when they get tired of flitting about, and if you are already occupied with a female companion the sea gull will still use your table as a kind of counter to display herself. It is embarrassing when she is mistaken for a member of your party. In mentioning German sea gulls, I do not suggest that they are a good buy, or even a souvenir. I am throwing in sea gulls and night clubs because such things interest a number of travelers, and Germany, Berlin in particular, is a good place for a bust.

The Saar, German by tradition, language and inclination, is at present tied to the French economy, and uses French francs for currency. There are no good buys available in the Saar which are not more readily available in France itself. There are no good buys at all in Belgium, not even the night life at its famous night clubs. Brussels is full of these, all expensive. Belgium does not offer much of anything of unique manufacture that cannot be had at a better price in another country. Lace is about the only exception, and only because Belgian lace is distinctively Belgian, which makes it a souvenir, like Brussels carpets. A female traveler who is lace-happy in Belgium will probably want to pick up a couple of pieces for her collection, although she should remember that she will also be lace-happy in the next country, and the second country's lace may be equally appealing and considerably cheaper, as in Ireland. Belgium is beautiful, picturesque and full of Flemish art. It is not a poor man's paradise.

Luxembourg can be classed with Belgium for shopping purposes. The economies of the two countries are integrated, Belgian francs pass at par in Luxembourg (but not vice versa), they have a common customs control with Holland, and neither offers any particular take-away bargains except the intangible ones. However, Luxembourg has one great advantage over Belgium from the viewpoint of the *gourmet.* While both countries are good-feeding areas, serving a high-class French cuisine extended by very good local specialties, eating is expensive in Belgium but much less so in Luxembourg. In addition, Luxembourg produces its own Moselle, which permits the hungry traveler to enjoy a bottle of the grape with his meals without paying through the nose for it.

It is the same with hard sauce. A visitor will not find an equivalent of Brussels' dusk-to-dawn night life in Luxembourg, but he can buy a drink there easily and less expensively than

like sovereigns, *louis d'or* and American double eagles command a premium on the open market. The two sovereign manufacturers made a profit of several dollars on each coin they turned out, over and above its gold content and the cost of producing it. The British government protested, but, as some court pointed out, the gold sovereign is no longer legal tender even in Great Britain, so counterfeiting could not be charged. The guys were simply selling genuine gold sovereigns at the going price. If it is possible to work a gimmick like this with gold, maybe something similar could be arranged with diamonds. I have not yet explored the possibilities in this field, and make no recommendations.

Finland, striving for holiday trade, provides a summer vacation area offering low-cost tours to Lapland and the Russian border, and "American plan" board (meaning five Finnish meals a day) for around $3. Except for this kind of value, it does not produce good buys, only souvenirs. Norway, Sweden and Denmark together form a kind of stable, semi-integrated economy which results in a more or less common and reasonable price level in the three countries, although they all argue about which is the cheapest for tourists. In a general way, Denmark grows the farm and dairy products, Sweden does the manufacturing, Norway fishes, hunts whales and produces ski-jumpers. Denmark is the cheapest place to eat, and Sweden is the best place to purchase manufactured goods. It is notable that the Danes and Norwegians frequently leap at the chance to buy their clothes and Christmas presents in Stockholm. Copenhagen is the only city in Scandinavia where a traveler can enjoy extensive night life—wild, woolly, and at low cost. Denmark, Norway and Sweden all produce fine silver at a fair price for de luxe merchandise.

Furs are surprisingly cheap in Norway. So is ski equipment and ski clothing, although a traveler can currently do better

in Austria if he is going in that direction. Swedish steelware, knives, scissors, razors and other cutlery are as good as any that can be had at any price, better than most. Swedish crystal and etched glass are unique, which puts them in the souvenir class. Danish porcelains are excellent, among the best in Europe for the money. So is Danish *akvavit*, a drink which can be bought with less formality in Denmark than anywhere else in Scandinavia. Another Danish good buy is the world-famous Tivoli Gardens, open from May to mid-September. This huge, and unique, playground offers entertainment to all comers, of all ages, at all price levels from nothing on up, band programs, concerts, fireworks, parades, ballroom dancing, ballet, amusement-park pitches, boat rides, vaudeville, restaurants, night clubs and what have you.

Norway is a good place to pick up a couple of broken bones if you are, as I was, dumb enough to try walking on slick, icy pavements with both hands in your pockets and a heavy camera slung over your shoulder in such a position that it will pop your ribs when you fall on it. This, when it occurred to me, was a delightful experience. Not that I liked the busted ribs, but I was taped so tightly for weeks afterward that I couldn't bend over, and enjoyed the unique pleasure, on the main streets of several important European cities, of saying to my wife, "Woman, tie my shoelace!" In Cologne I had a street photographer take a picture of her doing it. Any time I feel henpecked, I get the picture out and look at it.

There remains for documentation only the Balkan area, insofar as it is open to tourists at this date. While there is some talk of a relaxation of controls in Bulgaria and Albania to allow visitors to enter those countries, not very many have been able to get in, and not many more will be looking for good buys in that direction soon. In the circumstances, I shall stick to Yugoslavia, Greece and Turkey.

Yugoslavia is eager for tourist business. It takes all possible steps to promote it, such as horsing around with the official exchange rate from time to time and offering special discounts to foreigners who bring hard cash into the country. The discounts are not as good as free-market money exchange, which is not available to law-abiding visitors who comply with the strict currency regulations. Some unethical visitors do not comply with the strict currency regulations, but take into the country large quantities of free-market dinars which they have bought in the exchange houses of Trieste at about half the official price and neglect to declare when crossing the frontier, a dishonest practice that cuts the cost of food and lodging in Yugoslavia by a good 50%. Ethical visitors as well as those who may find it hard to resist temptation will find nothing to use their money for in the country except to buy food, a fair *slivovitz*, *rakia*, pretty good domestic cigarettes, and native handicraft souvenirs: Serbian dolls, Croatian jackets, Montenegrin hats, Macedonian art, some silver jewelry. Imports are rare; the shopper will not find unlimited stocks of foreign nylons, toothpaste, soap, lipstick, gin, magazines, newspapers, bicycles, shirts, socks, uncensored news, ballpoint pens, perfumes, shoes, raincoats, umbrellas, safety pins, medicines, handkerchiefs, spark plugs, wristwatches or anything else, and the Yugoslav economy itself produces only small quantities of relative necessities like soap and toothpaste. Best buys for Yugoslavia are supplies you buy first and take in with you, so travelers to that country should carry with them everything they will need *en route*, including, in the case of motorists, tools, spare tires, spare parts and a can in which to tote an extra supply of gasoline between Yugoslavia's widely spaced gasoline depots.

Tourists are normally given visas good for a visit of two months, more than enough time to quarter the country pretty

thoroughly from one end to the other, in spite of handicaps. The government, not a puppet of Russia, is itself Communist, has been Communist since it came into power, and announces publicly that it has every intention of remaining Communist. The secret police, mostly inconspicuous Neanderthals about seven feet high with hands like bunches of knuckly bananas, are everywhere. When they keep an eye on tourists, as they do, it is not because they suspect the tourists of being spies or want to frighten them, but to see that they do not observe the wrong things or listen to the wrong sources of information. The people are friendly, deeply grateful to Americans for American aid which keeps them from starving to death every so often, and will talk freely, even eagerly, to strangers if they can find a common tongue and the narks are not listening. Few can arrange a trip abroad, so there is no counter-tourist flow to clog the roads, which are the worst in free Europe but passable. Transportation is generally primitive, as are back-country hotels. National beauty spots like Bled, Lake Ohrid, Split and Dubrovnik on the Dalmatian coast, Sarajevo and a few other surviving remnants of the old, corrupt, capitalist days, are worth a visit. The country as a whole will prove intensely interesting to any traveler who wants to observe a functioning Communist state. Official exchange for the dinar is now 300 to the dollar, up 500% from what it was a few years ago and slightly less than half of what it should be. I myself wrote the first guidebook to postwar Yugoslavia but I don't recommend it because it is palpably prejudiced. However, during the last year or so a couple of better guidebooks to the country have appeared in print.

By keeping Albania carefully on the right and not going close enough to its borders to permit the Albanians to reach out and snag you for violating their frontier, it is possible to travel through Yugoslavia into Greece. Greece may also be

approached by air or by sea, but in any event there are not many good buys to be had there. This is because Greece, although now quite inexpensive for travelers, offers less in the way of take-home bargains than it does in magnificent scenery, historic ruins and impressive remnants of past glories, none exportable except in the form of snapshots and cherished memories.

In Corinth a small boy sold me an oxidized copper coin he had dug out of the rubble of the ancient city. He swore that it predated the Christian era by centuries. When I had rubbed the oxidization away I discovered that the coin was dated 1925, which, he explained, meant 1925 B.C. I am happy to have an old piece of money like this in my collection, but I contend that it qualifies logically as a souvenir, not as a good buy. The distinction should be obvious.

That part of Turkey which lies in Europe is only a small portion of total Turkish territory. But it contains Istanbul, and Istanbul is one of the loveliest places in the world for a shopper to go nuts. I have been saving money for a long time in anticipation of my next crack at the great Covered Bazaar, a unique collection of rabbit warrens covering several city blocks in which you can buy anything portable, from gold, diamonds, rubies and the treasures of the scented East to a pair of shoes or a box of matches. You have to haggle in the Covered Bazaar, and you are going up against experts, but it is great sport even when you get out-haggled. Istanbul is a fascinating city, far more Oriental than European, full of mosques, minarets, muezzins chanting their calls to prayer, narrow winding streets and shopkeepers eager to negotiate for gold, silver, rugs, silks, jewelry, fine leatherwork, water pipes, daggers, swords, and *objets d'art*. Anybody going that way should save some of his money for the bazaars, at all costs.

It is well to remember that a money black market flourishes

in Turkey. When Turkish bazaar keepers, with whom it is a matter of pride as well as business to make a sale, are hot to tempt you into buying, you can often make an advantageous deal in dollars as an adjunct to the transaction. At black market rates, very easy for conscienceless carpetbaggers to obtain, Turkey is one of the least expensive countries for visitors, particularly on the other side of the Bosporus. But that's Asia, and this is a European tipsheet.

The price haggling which is a characteristic and enjoyable operation in the Balkan and Latin countries does not obtain so strongly in Nordic and Anglo-Saxon countries. By and large, a traveler is wasting his time when he tries to hammer quoted prices down in Scandinavia, Switzerland, Germany, Austria, the Benelux countries and the British Isles, but wasting money if he does not put up a hard battle over prices in other European shopping areas. Even in the Latin countries a price posted conspicuously on a tag or label is pretty firm, and there is little point in trying to beat a discount out of a seller who is clearly a paid clerk having nothing more to do with the business than wrapping the merchandise and ringing the cash register. On the other hand, any vendor who looks you over thoughtfully before quoting a price orally is merely feeling for a grip, like a wrestler. Here you counter with a sneer and indifference, a grudging concession that the price seems fair enough but you don't have that much money, or a firm offer to buy at approximately half of the original quotation.

The last approach may backfire, in the hands of an amateur. A skillful tourist-skinner will sometimes set his primary sights so high that when the skinnee comes back with a tentative 50 per cent bid as an opener to further negotiations, the skinner can then roar, "Sold!" and begin wrapping. I have had this happen to me several times, so I cannot pretend to be

an expert haggler. My daughter, possibly because she spent the second half of her first twelve years mainly in Latin countries, is the most ruthless, cold-blooded, hard-headed, experienced chiseler of prices I have ever witnessed in action. An exposition of her technique may be helpful to other travelers.

I once saw her go in catch as catch can against a French Moroccan rug-and-leatherwork peddler on the Riviera. These cookies are as tough as they come, and know all the tricks. Kendal had her eye on a red leather purse with gilt trimmings, a trumpery thing worth possibly a dollar. The peddler offered it at $3.50, feinting for a bid near the $2 level.

Kendal said, "It's awfully pretty, and it's cheaper than I thought it would be. I wish I could afford it. Have you anything less expensive?"

The peddler said, "The brown one is two and a half, little girl. But I make you a price on the red one. Business is lousy. How much you got to spend?"

"Not very much. How much is the little coin purse?"

"A dollar. Look, I give you the red bag for $2.50."

Adults cannot expect a rapid run-down like this from French Moroccans. But this one was dealing with a child, not fair game even for a rug peddler, and he wanted to get the transaction over with and go after bigger stuff. Kendal was relying on this.

She said wistfully, "I *do* like the red bag." She took a handful of coins out of her pocket and counted them, not too ostentatiously. They added up to 95 cents. She sighed and let her shoulders slump, making a movement as if to turn away. It was really nauseating to watch.

The peddler said wheedlingly, "Little girl, the nice coin purse. I give it to you for 75 cents, and you have 20 cents left to carry in it. Here."

As God is my witness, her lower lip trembled when she shook her head. I was sitting on a bench not more than ten feet away, and I saw the whole dreadful business. But I didn't interfere. Peddlers have to learn to look out for themselves.

He tried to hook her with the coin purse at offers down to 40 cents, then with the brown bag down to 95 cents, then with the red bag down to $1.25, with time out to run home to get more money. She continued to shake her head, dumbly and hopelessly, her eyes on the red bag and the coins clutched in her hand, dashing fake tears from her eyes now and then with the back of her wrist and making occasional gestures as if to turn away and go weep her heart out on the bosom of the nearest tree because she didn't have a home to go to for more money or for any other reason. He finally wore himself out and took the 95 cents for the red bag. Not because her act softened his black mercenary heart, but because it convinced him that 95 cents was her total capital and only the red bag would get it.

A really remarkable expression came over his face as he watched her take her gum, her handkerchief, her skate-key and a respectable wad of cash savings out of another pocket, pop them into the new bag, and walk over to where I was sitting to show me what she had bought, as merry as a grig.

So there are ways and means of acquiring a quantity of useful boodle in Europe at very good prices, if you know what you are doing and where to buy. There is always the small related problem of carrying the boodle from country to country, and bringing it back to the United States without the payment of excess customs duties. This subject calls for further exploration.



# 11

## THE CARE AND FEEDING OF CUSTOMS OFFICIALS

*Border authorities: their inherent advantage over travelers, and what the traveler can do about it with a sweet smile. How to cross European borders without bothersome baggage inspections. "Reasonable amounts" of personal possessions defined, elastically. Duty-dodging. Sources of up-to-date information about European customs controls. Export and import controls on "holiday purchases," in theory and in practice. European oral customs declarations compared with U. S. written declarations. U. S. customs exemptions explained, as nearly so as is humanly possible.*

One of the most important things a traveler should remember about all border officials in all countries is that they are not

only playing ball on their own home grounds but act pretty much as their own referees as well. The final say about who and what crosses any border, and whether or not the crossing is tax-free, is largely a matter of personal judgment on the part of the officials stationed at the crossing point—rules, regulations and the law notwithstanding. An acquaintance of mine, a rather high-nosed European *baronne* who is proud of her title and family name, learned this the hard way.

With some preliminary difficulties, she managed to obtain a visa permitting her to visit the United States. When she landed in this country, she was winnowed out from a crowd of friends, all returning native citizens, and put through the mill with other foreigners. The immigration officials didn't treat her case with proper respect and alacrity, or so it seemed to her. According to the report I heard, she waved her visa-ed passport under the nose of one of them and said haughtily, "I am the Baroness Blank. I have a visa which I obtained from your consul in Switzerland. Please permit me to be on my way."

The immigration man said, "There are certain preliminary formalities, lady. I'll be with you in a minute."

"Formalities bore me. Please look at my passport and let me go."

Bristles began to rise on the back of the inspector's neck. He said, patiently enough, "I'm sorry. You'll have to wait your turn."

"I waited for weeks at your consul's office in Switzerland. I have my visa. I refuse to be kept standing about in this drafty barn. My friends—"

"I'm sorry about the drafts and your friends, but I only work here. You'll have to wait your turn."

She kept yammering about her visa, and the trouble she

had gone through to get it, and her friends, and how if she was acceptable to the consul in Switzerland there was no excuse for a uniformed flunkey to interfere with her free entrance into a free country, and other things. He finally said, "Lady, just for the record, it doesn't matter if you have a visa signed by the Secretary of State. If I, personally, don't like you, or your politics, or the sound of your voice, or the color of your eyes, you don't get in. I'm not saying that I've formed any opinions yet, but I'm *on the verge!*" He controlled his voice, which had risen suddenly to a scream. "Now please sit down and wait until I get around to you."

The *baronne* was haughty, but not dumb. She sat down. When her turn came, she was very sweet to the inspector and waggled her nice eyelashes at him in a way that showed she thought he was a great big wonderful hunk of man. He let her by, as he probably would have anyway. But he didn't have to.

This is technically true all over Europe, as well as in the United States. No foreigner entering any country has any inalienable rights that some border official can't cut right out from under him if he feels like it, and either send the traveler back the way he came or give him a bad time before letting him jump through the hoop. For this reason, smart visitors will remember to be nice to all border officials at all times, and not get anybody's hackles up by refusing to comply with reasonable requests for co-operation, nor throw their weight around to show what big wheels they are.

In practice, Americans have an easy time of it everywhere. They bring so much money to the areas which they visit that European national authorities compete with each other to minimize red tape which might strangle the flow. Even those few countries which still require visas grant them with a

minimum of formality, either free or for a small charge, and while visitors to some countries are still supplied at border entry points with papers to be presented to local police officials wherever the travelers stop for the night, the burden of the presentation is invariably taken over by hotel *concierges*, so that the travelers are not inconvenienced. When it comes to entering, passing through and leaving any country in free Europe, an American carrying a valid passport, with visa when necessary, will find the doors wide open, no questions asked and no hindrance put in his path unless he is a notorious political Typhoid Mary or has a bench warrant out against him, sometimes not even then. The only practical problem connected with European border crossings involves the personal property a traveler carries with him.

A visitor in Europe has no more inalienable right to carry personal property into or through any country free of customs duties than he has an inalienable right to enter the country himself. There is a law somewhere on the statute books which either bars, or taxes, the importation of the clothes he is wearing and the glass in his spectacles. In practice, the laws are not enforced, because enforcement would quickly cook the tourist goose and dry up the golden-egg market. However, freedom granted to visitors to import an unlimited amount of tax-free consumable goods would work an equal hardship on the country's economy, because then travelers coming from a relatively low-cost country into a relatively high-cost country would carry with them everything they might need to eat, drink, smoke, read or wear while in the high-cost country, and would not shed dollars in transit. This would create a dismal dollar shortage in the second country. The phrase "reasonable amount" was invented to provide a solution.

As it works today, a traveler temporarily visiting in Euro-

pean countries may legally carry with him reasonable amounts of practically anything except opium, pornography and atomic bombs. He may take his clothes and personal possessions, a means of transportation, cameras, gifts, souvenirs, sporting tackle, a typewriter, tobacco, liquor, perfume, food, and currency, sometimes even firearms, which on other occasions require an import license. Some countries define a reasonable amount in several categories, most commonly tobacco, liquor, domestic—never foreign—currency, cameras, film, perfumes and food. Caspar Milquetoasts who hope to avoid even the faintest shadow of difficulty at European borders will do well to cross them without these articles, or at least only with bottles that have been opened, packages that have been broken for use, and amounts that do not exceed the specific allowances which vary from year to year and country to country but can always be ascertained in advance by reference to an up-to-date guidebook, a travel agent, the free literature put out by tourist bureaus and airlines, or the very good *AAA Travel Guide to Europe—Motoring Abroad*, available free to AAA members. But it is the man at the border who really has the final say about what is reasonable in any circumstances. If he is on your side, you can wade through with tons of stuff. Since it is dangerous, not to say unethical, to attempt to bribe customs inspectors, they must be wooed with a winning smile, an engaging personality, and hearty laughter at their jokes.

On one occasion Elva, Kendal and I crossed into France from Italy with a whole carload of loot. The cargo included a dozen bottles of *strega*, a fourteen-pound *prosciutto*, two new overcoats, six meters of gold-brocade dress material, a pair of expensive Genoese dolls Kendal had trapped me into buying for her in a moment of careless generosity, and 6,000 cigarettes. The cache lay on the back seat of the car, the over-

coats spread on top not so much to hide the rest as to keep the coats from wrinkling.

We came to the border station at Ponte San Luigi and checked out through the Italian customs. This is best done by keeping your clapper shut, except to answer questions. The Italian officials asked no questions and heard no lies. We rolled across to the other end of the bridge, which had meanwhile turned into the Pont St. Louis, and checked in with the French border control.

The French customs guard said, "Anything to declare, monsieur?"

I asked, "What is declarable?" (Note how skillfully I rolled with the punch on this one. He was going to have to guess what I was carrying, item by item, not win a free confession.)

He countered with, "Everything but your wife and daughter."

I saw immediately that I was up against a pro, and would have to try a different strategy. Luckily his comeback qualified as a wisecrack, however feeble. And my family is well trained.

All three of us went off into high whinnies of unchecked mirth, thumping each other's backs, slapping our thighs, doubling over with helpless laughter. Between spasms I gasped "Oh—ha ha—that's a good one. I—ho ho—never heard anything so—haw haw—clever. Well, then I declare—ho ho—everything except my wife and—hee hee—daughter. How's that?"

He beamed at me in a friendly way and said, "What is everything?" He was softened up, but not licked.

Kendal tried to develop hysterics again, but didn't bring it off successfully. Elva and I only chuckled. I said, "A few odds and ends," and got out to open the back trunk so he could

look at the suitcases and maybe forget to use words like "Cigarettes?" and "Liquor?" which I would have to answer directly. He picked out one small suitcase for me to open, standard operating procedure. While I was opening it he leaned in through the car window and lifted the coats. Six thousand cigarettes, fourteen pounds of ham and a case of *strega* smiled up at him.

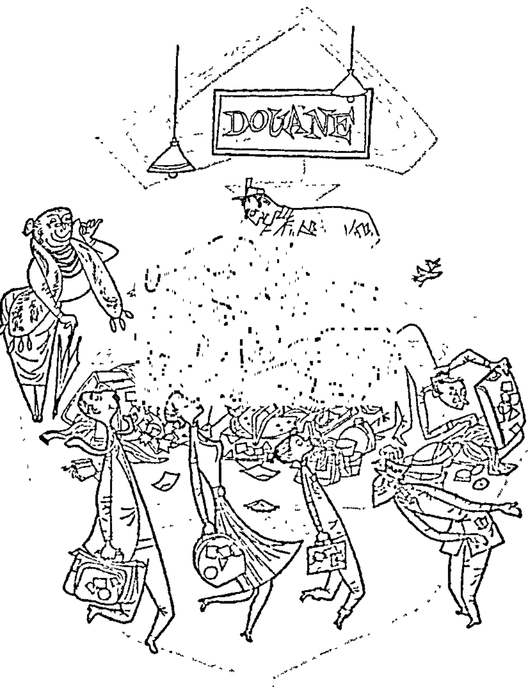
He said, "*Mon Dieu!*" under his breath, laying the coats back over what they covered and tucking in the edges with what I can only describe as feverish haste to get it done before somebody else saw what he had seen. He had been indulging in a gesture, not really looking for anything. The discovery complicated his life. He had the choice of getting out the declaration forms, in quintuplicate, and sharpening his pencil for half an hour of scribbling, or forgetting the whole business. He forgot it.

In that case, 6,000 cigarettes were, in the inspector's opinion, a reasonable supply of tobacco, although the book defined a reasonable supply as a thousand cigarettes per adult traveler. And it is the customs inspector's opinion which counts, as I have already suggested. We were friendly, we had laughed at his joke, and we hadn't lied to him, at least not directly. This is most important. A traveler who happens to have 6,000 cigarettes in his possession can refer to them lightly as "a few odds and ends" only up to the point where he is asked, "How *many* cigarettes?" and must then give up the reluctant truth. Otherwise he is embarking on dark and troubled waters.

All customs inspectors *know* that the average traveler has cigarettes with him, or a bottle of perfume for Mama, or a couple of extra rolls of film for the camera slung over his shoulder. They aren't dopes. When they ask explicit questions, as they do only occasionally, about one or more of these

items, it makes them resentful to have the traveler blandly assume they are dopey enough to fall for his claim that he never smokes, hates the odor of perfume, and carries the camera only for use as an emergency anchor. At best, they are liable to leave a visitor of this kind standing around for half an hour with his conscience eating at him while they clear other, more sensible travelers who have answered, "Certainly I have camera film. Four rolls of it. In the brown bag over there." They aren't going to look in the brown bag after that, or stall this man any longer than necessary. He goes through quickly and with courteous treatment. And that should be the primary aim of every traveler facing a customs inspection; not to slip through a bit of contraband which he could take along anyway by paying a small tax, but to get the examination over with minimum delay and the least possible rumpling of freshly ironed linen. This is the honest, ethical, upright attitude. The fact that a straightforward declaration of the camera film in answer to a specific question about it will tend to preclude further specific questions about other restricted items may also be taken into consideration.

Very few European customs inspectors will attempt a really thoroughgoing search of any ordinary American traveler's baggage. In my own experience I have never submitted to any such inspection, nor heard of one not justified by peculiar circumstances. Nationals of a European country are often closely examined by their own officials, but American visitors are given an easy ride as a matter of policy. Tourist propaganda released by a number of countries is quite frank about this distinction. So are orders to the customs inspectors. But equally clear are the rules which say all travelers must make "free, complete and voluntary" declarations if they are to be entitled to the granted exemptions, and while I have always


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interpreted "free, complete and voluntary" to refer to a yielding of information in much the same way I would yield my pearly teeth, one by one, in a dentist's chair, it is nevertheless always unwise to employ the lie direct. Stalling is much better.

Luckily for everyone concerned, European customs inspectors most often accept oral declarations in place of *written* declarations. This permits travelers to oil their way across borders by the use of free, complete and voluntary *declarations* such as "a few odds and ends," "clothes and personal effects," or "the usual souvenirs." Further details are rarely necessary. The customs inspector no more wants to fill out a sheaf of forms and collect a few pfennigs in tax than the traveler wants to hang around waiting for him to do it.

I am not suggesting the vague, or noncommittal, declaration to bona-fide smugglers. For them, it won't work. But an average traveler in Europe will pick up and carry with him an average collection of booty; clothes, souvenirs and odds and ends, some of which may be technically taxable or subject to restrictions at borders. In all fairness, it is impossible for a traveler not to acquire at least a couple of such objects if he buys anything at all in Europe. He will be obliging himself and the customs officials if he doesn't sound off too loudly about just what he is carrying. If the customs men really want to know, they will ask. The truth, nothing but the truth, and no more truth than is necessary to answer the question is advisable at this point.

The token baggage examination is common in Europe, the real examination virtually nonexistent. Inspectors will often even let a visitor pick a single bag to open for a quick look, in compliance with regulations which say that hand baggage is subject to inspection. When this occurs, it is sensible and not unethical to select a grip which holds clothing instead of personal supplies of camera film, contraceptives, perfume,

playing cards, drugs, coffee, gold, diamonds, liquor and cigarettes. Some countries bar certain of these articles in theory, others make the inspector decide on "reasonable amounts," which he would rather not do if he can avoid it. I have never known any European customs inspector to clamp the law down rigidly on prohibited items which are clearly intended for the traveler's personal use and are not in excessive quantity. Still, there is no point in inviting attention to them.

In a number of European countries even the bare formality of a border check on Americans is overlooked. I have crossed, with my family and too much junk, seven consecutive national frontiers literally without opening a thing for inspection except passports and the *carnet* for a car; not a suitcase, purse, camera case, rear trunk or bag. And a frisk of the pockets and persons of visiting Americans simply does not take place in free Europe today. The effect on tourist business would be disastrous. Thus anyone packing small bundles of pornography or smuggled currency in his hip pocket can get it through without difficulty.

I do not have any suggestions to make about smuggling pornography except to point out that, in the eyes of customs officials, there is no such thing as a reasonable amount of it. About currency, which has already been discussed, it is enough to say that when a written declaration of money imports is required, as it is in some countries, there is no reason why a traveler should not record everything he is carrying except domestic money in excess of the legal import, if any, and the getaway funds tucked away in his watch pocket as an emergency ace in the hole. He can always export as much foreign money as he declared at the entry point, and no questions are asked if he has less. He could have lost it in a crap game.

In smuggling currency, which is highly unethical and a

practice to be deplored in spite of the fact that many people do it because it cuts costs in countries where free-market money is not available, it is sensible to separate declared moneys from undeclared moneys in advance. Rarely, an official accepting the declaration may ask to see the dollars or francs or lire or marks or whatever else the traveler has noted on his declaration, and it is a tough deal to dive blind into a pocket hoping to dredge up the right wad of bills without also dredging up the wrong wad at the same time, right under the inspector's nose. Not that I have had any personal experiences of this kind, but other people tell me it is most embarrassing.

Exports of personal property, like imports, are controlled in almost all countries, although mainly in theory. Technically, a traveler can acquire and export only a limited over-all value of personal property in most European countries; none at all of certain items, a small number or amount of others. Regulations on the books of some countries further state that the visitor may be required to show that his acquisitions were purchased with funds obtained at legal exchange, or acquired in some other legitimate manner, and if all the overlapping laws were strictly applied a visitor would be lucky to get out with his gold fillings. But all European countries are so eager for the money which tourists leave behind them that they make it as simple as possible for visitors to take away reasonable amounts of almost anything. As a practical matter, any traveler may buy and export freely from any European country—Turkey, once a lonely exception, has fallen into line—from $400 to $500 worth of holiday purchases—clothes, luggage, souvenirs, *objets d'art*, watches, cameras and so on, and can ascertain from the sellers, his own consulate, travel agencies, tourist bureaus, up-to-date guidebooks or the annually

revised *AAA Travel Guide to Europe,* already noted, exactly what specific restrictions are currently and *practically* in effect on any of these items.

He can also bring into the country, and re-export, another $400 to $500 worth of similar holiday purchases acquired elsewhere, as well as his used clothes, toilet equipment, luggage, umbrellas, cameras, binoculars, watches, lap-robes, portable phonographs, ski equipment, banjos, primus stoves, sleeping bags and other impedimenta normal to travelers, so that a family of three people traveling together can legitimately move from country to country with approximately $5,000 worth of personal possessions in a pile big enough to frighten any customs inspector half off his rocker even to look at it. The reaction of most—you might say all—customs inspectors toward departing, as well as arriving, tourists is generally, "Please keep moving and do not block the exit." They may ask you if you have any salmon eggs, or pork, or coffee extract, or plant-clippings, or Communist propaganda. The answer they hope to hear is a simple, "No," and if they get it, you are on your way without further interference. I once had a Belgian border guard look at the carload of junk I was carrying along with my family, scratch his head, and ask, "*Vous êtes déménagé, monsieur?*" meaning was I in the process of moving my household? Naturally enough, we all guffawed heartily at this sally. He waved us through.

This same angle is still another reason why international travel by car or some other means of private transportation is generally preferable to travel by public carriers. Operators of ships, planes, trains and buses which cross European borders sometimes take it upon themselves to supply their passengers with customs declaration forms to be filled out before the border is reached. Not always, but sometimes, primarily to

speed things up at the customs check point. The written declarations are hard to get around for a traveler who is loaded with an excess camera, for example. He must either set down the bald facts in black and white, freely, completely and voluntarily, requiring the inspector who gets the form to make uncomfortable decisions, or fake the facts and take chances that the extra camera may be observed, a tricky business which might result in embarrassment. But written declarations are never required from travelers who boil up to a border post in a car or on a bike and say, "Good afternoon. May we go through?" The customs inspector will either answer, "Sure," and wave them along, or ask for an oral declaration (here you simply outstall him, in the manner already demonstrated), or make a token inspection of a bag or so, most *often* one. The fact that you have put nothing down in writing makes it unnecessary for him to verify anything.

The trend continues toward increasing tolerance for American visitors in all European customs inspections. Doubtful issues, if and when they arise, are usually resolved in favor of bona-fide travelers, who are, in the delicate words of the French authorities, expected to wear "personal jewelry corresponding to the social position and personality of the wearer," a lovely phrase even looser than "reasonable amount." As more than one travel authority has pointed out, it is a good idea to invite the attention of customs officers to articles of high value—gold, valuable jewelry, mink coats and other trinkets—when entering any country, so that no difficulty will be encountered in re-exporting those articles afterward. It is an even *better* idea to follow the standard rule and shut up about them until you are asked, specifically. Not to beat the rap, because there is no rap to beat, but to minimize red tape. As already acquired personal possessions, there is no restriction on their import or export in any country so long as it is

clear that they enter that country with the same person who takes them out. And if, at the exit point, some official politely suggests that a written declaration, or bonding, at the entry point might have expedited their re-export, the traveler may reply, with equal politeness, that he wasn't asked for a written declaration or bond. That is ordinarily that.

The only articles of personal property which consistently and invariably call for a written declaration at all European borders are automobiles and other self-powered vehicles. Paradoxically, these are the easiest of all things to take through customs anywhere. The international customs documents, or *carnets de passage en douanes*, which are issued by European automobile clubs to cover self-propelled vehicles, and which may be obtained either in Europe at the time the vehicle is purchased or through the AAA in the United States (always remembering that customs duties apply to a car bought from this end), are surely one of the greatest boons to travelers since the invention of the wheel. Once a motorist is set with these, his only other job is filling in descriptive data about the vehicle on a series of printed coupons. The customs man at the entry point to any country takes half of one of these, stamps it, stamps the other half, and occasionally tells the visitor that there will be a small additional charge for use of the roads, or for liability insurance if the traveler does not have the right kind of insurance already. On leaving the country, the visitor surrenders the other half of the coupon. That's all. No bonds, no duties, no red tape, no fuss. It is eleven times easier to get from any country to any other country in Europe by car than it is to drive across the International Bridge from Laredo, Texas, into Mexico, as anybody knows who has tried both. Even when you are suspected of using the car for smuggling purposes.

On one occasion a peculiar set of circumstances took me in

and out of Switzerland four times in three days, a shuttle movement which makes border officials very suspicious. We were on our way from Paris to Rome, and went by way of Geneva to buy Swiss cigarettes as well as a bundle of free French scratch with which to pay a Paris hotel bill I had hung on the cuff. Because it is risky, as well as illegal, to send French currency through the mails, I drove the francs back to France about an hour after entering Switzerland and used them to buy a French money order at the nearest post office. I then returned to Switzerland, both crossings registered in my passport as well as in the *carnet de passage* for the car. The Swiss border guards gave me a peculiar look, but asked no questions.

The next day we drove to Sion, in the southern part of Switzerland. I had intended to go by way of the north, or Swiss, shore of Lake Geneva, but upon discovering that we had left France with an inadequate supply of cognac, about as stupid a thing as any traveler can do short of starting out across the Sahara without water, I changed my mind and went instead by the south, or French, shore of the lake. We checked out of Switzerland in the morning, drove to Thonon, bought a gallon of the best, and checked back into Switzerland a few hours later. This was the third entry in twenty-four hours.

The Swiss customs man looked at the *carnet de passage*, looked at my passport, looked at us, and walked thoughtfully around the car peering in the windows.

"Anything to declare?" he asked.

"Clothes, personal effects and the usual junk."

He was another pro, and he wanted *information*, not an excuse to wave us along. He said, "Cigarettes?"

"Four thousand." Before he could start reading the rules at

me, I said, "Swiss. I bought them in Geneva this morning."

"Liquor?"

"Five bottles of cognac."

In Switzerland the definition is "a small quantity for personal use." He thought that five bottles was a small enough quantity, but he had to see the bottles. And he poked around in the back of the car for a while before he said, "You have business in Switzerland that requires you to come in to the country, and go out, and come in again and go out again and then come in again, all in two days?"

"No business. We're just tourists. It's like this—"

I explained about the money and the cognac shortage. He sent us through, finally. We went on to Sion, spent the night there, drove to Brig and over the Simplon Pass to Domodossola in Italy, and then, because the roads happen to run that way, back to Locarno, in Swiss territory again.

The customs man who questioned us at the border was *really* curious, this time. Cigarettes? Liquor? Cameras? Film? Drugs? Foodstuffs? How many watches did we have with us? How many were we going to buy in Switzerland? What was my business in Switzerland which required me to come in, and go out, and come in, and go out, and come in, and go out, and come in—

And so on, like a phonograph record with the needle stuck. I had been in Switzerland on at least five other occasions with the same car and the same *carnet,* and all the entries were recorded in the coupon stubs where he could read them off. We drew a baggage examination, one of the few times it ever happened in Switzerland, although even then it was not a real shakedown, as it might have been for Swiss nationals in the same circumstances. But we had intended to visit Italian friends at a place called Colico, on Lake Como, before going

to Lugano and Milan, and the side trip would have added another out-again, in-again, out-again on the *carnet*. We put Colico off until a later date.

So far, the discussion has concerned itself with European border crossings. In essence, they are a breeze, even in the most difficult circumstances, and will continue to become even breezier as tourism grows by leaps and bounds in Europe. This invisible export already brings to Europe more dollars than any other single export, and with several hundred thousand Americans going over every year eager to spend several hundred millions of dollars, border officials tend to co-operate more and more in making it easy for them to bring money in and take purchases out. Good manners, patience and the proper answers when questions are asked, not before, are all there is to it.

On the other side of the coin, there is the problem of getting the accumulated booty of a European tour through customs at the U. S. end. Here it should be observed that there are two essential differences between American customs inspectors and European customs inspectors. The American inspector does not have instructions to go easy on Americans, only to collect applicable duties. And he invariably demands a written declaration. Since he is unbribable, incorruptible and armed with plenty of authority, he must be approached with intelligence and understanding. He has one of the damnedest sets of rules to follow that were ever thought up.

U. S. customs regulations, if the duty-free limit has not been increased to $1,000 by the time this appears, provide that an American resident of the United States is entitled to import $500 worth of miscellaneous purchases duty-free during any six-months period if he has been out of the country for at least 12 days, or maybe it is two weeks, but only $200 worth

if he tries it more often than once every six months, always providing he has been gone 48 hours, which might mean two days, and nothing at all if he does it a second time within 31 days, or it could be one month, with values (at last, after years of doubt) clearly computed at wholesale, rather than retail, cost, and foreign currencies strictly convertible to dollar values either at official rates, free-market rates or some figure in between depending on how the inspector feels about it, with rigid limitations on the import of certain French perfumes, Danish silver and German cameras, but no limitations at all on other French perfumes, Danish silver and German cameras, a flat bar against most fruits, vegetables, plants, meats, pets and milk chocolate which does not claim to be milk chocolate on the label, another bar against liquor in excess of one gallon per person, a baby's personal exemption being filchable by his father or mother to bring in tax-free whiskey or even gifts for somebody else duty-free, except that in practice most gifts turn out to be taxable when pay-off time comes, nobody knows why, except that there is a different rule applicable to gifts which somebody has asked you to buy as opposed to those which are your own idea, and if you have ordered something before leaving the U. S. A. it is taxable when you bring it back although it might not be if you *hadn't* ordered it first, and if you send something home by mail instead of bringing it with you it is sometimes, not always, taxed to the recipient, while if you sell something brought in duty-free within three years instead of giving it away you are penalized double the duty, or maybe not, as well as other unequivocal and brilliantly defined rules for the guidance of travelers and customs inspectors. A leaflet which is put out by the Government Printing Office and which can be obtained from the Bureau of Customs in Washington, D. C.,

any local Collector of Customs or through automobile associations and travel agencies, is entitled *Customs Hints.* Not *Customs Regulations Explained* or *How to Cope with Customs* or *An Elementary Guide through the Customs Mill.* Just *Customs Hints,* and no promises that it will solve a traveler's problems or even help him over the hurdles. However, it is the best source material available. Any traveler who is planning a European shopping trip will do well to get himself a copy in advance and puzzle over it in advance.

The easiest and most sensible approach to an American customs examination is to throw yourself on the mercy of the court. You are probably going to take a rap of some kind anyway, and you will get off a lot easier financially, as well as in time served, if you leave it up to the judge instead of fighting him. This means that instead of keeping your kisser shut, as in Europe, and letting the inspector dredge for information question by question, you tell him as soon as he asks you what he is going to find out anyway, sooner or later.

Unlike European customs examiners, who don't really *want* to know what you are carrying in your baggage and hope you will not add to their worries by telling them *too much,* the U. S. man wants the facts, *in writing:* What did you buy, How much did you pay for it? In what *currency?* And where is it? Valuations for tax purposes are his problem, not *yours.* If you come clean with the dope he needs to make proper valuations, he will give you the best possible break on the tally. Conversely, if you drag your heels he has authority *to* exercise his personal judgment in a way that will give you a bad time in the pocketbook.

I am aware that some authorities recommend the closed-trap, or European, approach in dealing with U. S. customs inspectors. I will go along with this recommendation *insofar* as

it suggests that a running string of wisecracks does not oil any inspector's feathers. But when it comes to withholding information—no. It is impossible to alibi yourself for leaving something off a written declaration, and once you have put it down there is no point in stalling. I have gone through U. S. customs without even having the gift packages unwrapped or a sales slip examined, at low cost and on my own say-so, at the same time and in the same shed with fellow-travelers who were sweating jelly beans before the inspector got through dredging information out of them they might just as well have volunteered to begin with.

Coming home, by ship or by plane, the traveler will be supplied with U. S. Baggage Declaration and Entry forms, and instructions (of a kind) on how to fill them out. The instructions state, in substance, that a returning resident must list the nature, cost and currency with which purchased of all articles he has acquired while abroad, including repairs and alterations to objects previously owned and articles which do not accompany him but which will follow.

Note the use of the words "all articles." Non-residents, while more limited than residents in the amount of liquor and cigars they can bring with them, are allowed to omit the details of clothing, personal effects, household goods and such items. I returned to the United States with my family after six years in South America and Europe, not certain whether I was legally a resident or non-resident but inclined to regard myself as a resident. We had fourteen pieces of luggage with us, as well as a ton and a half of household possessions waiting for orders on the dock in Marseilles, and other acquisitions temporarily stored in odd spots from Stockholm to Arequipa, Peru. Reporting "all articles" as a returning resident would have involved listing not only a shrunken human head bought

for dollars, a devil mask acquired with Bolivian bolivianos, an Easter Island idol bought for Chilean pesos, a set of silver purchased with Peruvian soles and a doll acquired in Bahia for cruzeiros, but three-thousand-and-some pounds of clothes, luggage, pictures, souvenirs, curios, sheets, pillowcases, blankets, pots, pans, hot-water bottles and other household furnishings we had acquired on European soil and elsewhere for various kinds of strange money, as well as everything we wore and carried with us, right down to our Spanish shoes with the Austrian shoelaces. At original cost. I decided that we were non-residents. I had to drink three-quarters of a gallon of cognac rather more quickly than I would have liked, to reduce it to the quantity returning non-residents can bring into the U. S. A., but aside from the usual after-effects I had no further difficulty.

Since foreign acquisitions which were ordered before the traveler left home are taxable without exemption, a prospective buyer should think first before ordering, in the United States, anything which is to be delivered to him in Europe and shipped home later. Most particularly, an automobile. Family exemptions can be pooled to cover the value of a car purchased directly in the European field. However, duties on foreign automobiles are only 10 per cent of depreciated value, not on purchase price, and because many other imported articles are taxed at a much higher rate, exemptions should first be applied to cover those other articles. For any family group planning to buy not only a car but other goods equal or nearly equal in value to their combined exemptions, it does not matter whether they order the car in advance or wait until they get there. The 10-per cent bite will apply either way.

Gifts sent home to friends and relatives are similarly taxable,

strictly to the recipient unless they happen to be worth $10 or less. In this case they are exempt. The giver pays tax on gifts in excess of the $10 value which he brings back with him, but there is no law to prevent him from bringing in articles for his personal use, tax-free, and deciding to give them away afterward.

A traveler who is so short-sighted and reckless with his money as to buy a Swiss watch, German camera, Italian Fiat or any other valuable article of foreign manufacture in the United States and take it abroad with him will do well to register it and get a certificate from the customs laddies when he leaves, to preclude arguments with another set of customs laddies when he tries to bring it back again without payment of duty. Our boys are a lot tougher about this than European inspectors, because our boys are dealing with their own nationals. The traveler will also do well to save sales slips for everything he buys abroad. They aren't mandatory, but when you can't put the right purchase price down on your declaration, the inspector has to guess. He may not always underguess, although he is inclined to be reasonable.

The granted exemptions extend beyond those articles contained in the traveler's hand baggage. They can be applied to cover goods which are to follow him if he includes these items in a duplicate declaration when he returns. There is no way, twist or trick by which any traveler without diplomatic immunity from customs examination can legally bring into the country, taxed or untaxed, more than one each of certain articles of foreign manufacture trademarked in the United States: Leica cameras, some kinds of Danish silver, bottles of certain brands of French perfume and other luxury items. The list grows as more foreign manufactures are registered for United States trademark, and there is no way to be certain

about anything except to ask before buying. Any object with a foreign trade name which the traveler has seen on sale in the United States should be questioned. Two or three people traveling together can *each* carry a Leica, or perfume, or Danish silver.

Special rules apply to antiques. These are admitted to the United States free of duty, if old enough, although the average traveler has a fat chance of exporting any really valuable antique from any European country unless he smuggles it, a risky business, and even if he gets it as far as the United States he may find that he has to pay duty after all because it is a phoney. Anyone who is planning to make a large investment in antiques, or jewels, or furs or any other high-cost luxury item should check with the customs service first and learn what the tax rates are and the applicable regulations. If he can.

I carried on a running correspondence for months with a Collector of Customs in an attempt to find out if a certain import I had in mind was or was not taxable, and at what rate. The Collector's replies to my questions were all prompt, courteous, studded with references to Paragraph 1632 of the Tariff Act of 1930, and as uncommitted as a British newspaper report of a sex crime before the trial has come off. He told me everything except what I wanted to know; on the facts, which I set forth several times, would I be required to pay a tax, or wouldn't I? What the Collector did not want to say, I am certain, was that it all depended on how the examining inspector felt on the day the import floated into his jurisdiction.

That is the crux of all dealings with all customs inspectors, everywhere. They are judge, jury, referee, umpire, interpreters of regulations, appraisers and collectors of tax. In Europe, they

are salesmen of national hospitality as well. A traveler need not worry too much about any of the European brand so long as he remembers that a soft answer turneth away wrath, and *no entra mosca en boca cerrada*, a Spanish saying which implies that flies never wander into a mouth which does not flap open to attract them.

Elva and I drove into Greece by a little used road which we found by accident. It was late in the fall, long past the tourist season, and not much tourist traffic passed over that road at any time. The two men at the border check point were surprised to see us and, I think, delighted. It offered them a break in their boredom.

The man in charge spoke good English. He invited us to alight and have coffee with him, which we did. The coffee-drinking took the better part of half an hour, during which time we exchanged anecdotes and small talk about the weather. Nothing was said about baggage examinations until the inspector brought up the subject of smuggling.

"Watch movements are a favorite article of contraband in this country," he said. "Because this is a remote post, and we do not have much to do, smugglers do not often come this way. We have plenty of time to search their effects, while on more popular roads only a token search is made. But one or two hopefuls have tried it. We took 7,000 watch movements from a car like yours only two weeks ago."

I said, "Very interesting."

"We had to take the car apart to do it, search all the bags, rip out their linings, take up the floor boards, dismantle the upholstery. I'm afraid we left rather a mess before we finished."

"Bothersome," I said.

"And time-consuming, which means nothing to us. Actually

we would rather be doing something than nothing. But I would never have bothered with a search like that if the smuggler had not betrayed himself."

"How?"

The inspector beamed, reaching for the coffee pot.

"He didn't like my coffee. I make the best coffee in Greece, and he was in too much of a hurry even to accept a second cup. Naturally I knew there was something nagging at him. It was only a question of finding it. Another cup, madame?"

Elva said, "Delighted. It's really remarkable coffee."

It was, too. It tasted like hot, sweetened river silt, and I could make a better brew any time by boiling peanut shells in a rubber boot. But after the third cup we were courteously waved along without so much as a question asked, much less any baggage examination. I have often wondered if the smuggler was really nervous and in a hurry because of his nervousness, or only a coffee connoisseur. In either event, it goes to show the importance of being nice to customs officials.

# 12

## OF SHOES, AND SHIPS, AND SEALING WAX

*Odds and ends of unclassified but useful information for the traveler. European shopping services, emergency fire escapes and the wisdom of carrying toilet soap and a pocketknife. Electric traveling appliances, pro and con. Orlons and dacrons as important money-savers. Swiss, English and French schools as places to park bothersome small fry during a European tour. Free rides on the English socialized medicine set-up. Some simple but important conversion formulas for use in interpreting European standards of measurement. A final brilliant example of how properly exploited technicalities can result in a cash profit. A glance at the progress of the air age, another at*

*current developments in the travel field which may tend to reduce future costs even further for visitors to Europe.* Bon voyage.

Magda was slim, lovely and Viennese. She had tawny eyes, and she was crazy about me with a passion I neither understood nor reciprocated. She used to creep into my bed in the middle of the night, wrap herself warmly around my neck, put her nose against my ear, and purr like a motorcycle. The rhythmic purring kept me awake but sent her to sleep. Whenever I moved after that, she would instinctively sink her claws into me, then wake up and begin to purr again. Between motorcycle noises and the four sets of meathooks that socked into me whenever I twitched, I never got much sleep. Throwing her out was a waste of time. The *pension* where we both lived had no screens on the windows, and any crack wide enough to admit a minimum amount of breathable air was wide enough to admit Magda. I finally cured the situation by sewing a catnip mouse into Elva's pillow, and thereafter slept as comfortably as any husband can expect to sleep while his wife lies awake cursing cats.

A suggestion about when and how best to employ a catnip mouse qualifies as a tipoff which cannot be directly related to eating, drinking, exchange-gimmicking or getting from place to place. I offer here a small stock of miscellaneous tipoffs which, while they may not always result in direct cash savings, will smooth the path of travelers and add to the pleasure of any European trip.

In the opening paragraphs of this handbook I suggested that it was most important for an American traveler in Europe to be prepared to adapt himself to European conventions and behavior patterns. It is worthwhile emphasizing that unless he does, he is going to be frustrated at every turn, unneces-

sarily but inevitably. It took me the better part of two years to learn that it is impossible to persuade a French waiter to serve the salad with the meat course or a glass of water at any time, a Danish waiter to get the lead out of his britches, an Italian waiter to omit the sugar when making a *cappuccino*, or a British waiter to bring a napkin—serviette, rather—without a preliminary debate about it. During that period I wasted a lot of energy which could have been better devoted to eating food when, as and how it was brought to the table.

There is no point in telling European waiters how to do anything. They will do it the way they are accustomed to doing it. There is, in fact, no point in suggesting to any European that anything he does or fails to do is done better by Americans in the United States. Whether it be true or not, he won't necessarily believe it, and the suggestion may hurt his feelings. It is far better and more practical for Americans to adjust themselves to circumstances, admire those aspects of European life most worthy of admiration, and take what they get without argument.

Thus nobody should ever try to expound the theory of a dry martini to European barmen who have never made one before. Martini vermouth, the sweet variety, is a popular *apéritif* in many parts of Europe, taken straight. A cocktail hound who carelessly tosses out the word "martini" will ordinarily get a glass of this, and he is only wasting time if he tries to explain that a martini is not made with Martini but with Noilly Prat, and not too much of that, but a lot of gin, well chilled, with a squirt of the oil from a lemon peel and a stuffed olive in the glass. (When you come to think about it, a martini sounds a lot crazier than it tastes.) The barman who tries to follow instructions without previous experience will serve you one of the most horrible concoctions you ever tasted, and stand around looking like a slapped spaniel until you get

it down. Dry martinis are standard products at de luxe hotel bars, and at Harry's New York Bar or the equivalent wherever you find it. A traveler who wants that particular drink should patronize these places, although it is my considered opinion that visitors who spend a great deal of time in places like Harry's New York Bar are not getting the most out of a trip to Europe.

It is a mistake to go shopping with a steerer. He gets a cut all down the line, and guess who pays it. A traveler who is weak on the language and long on spending money should ask about local shopping services at any travel agency or tourist bureau, and pay the regular fee for this service. But it is always better to shop on your own if you can manage it. Any hotel *concierge* will give a guest good tips to good shops as a normal service for his normal *pourboire*. So will practically any other local resident who is asked, for nothing.

It is a waste of calories to sweat heavily about the lack of fire escapes in most European hotels. There is nothing anyone can do about it except hope for the best, or carry a knotted rope with which to escape from the window, as Hans Christian Andersen used to do. The firetraps rarely catch on fire, for some reason I am unable to explain. In the event they do, their guests are, in a manner of speaking, cooked. Small hotels, which are generally cheaper than large hotels, also have windows which are within jumping distance of the ground.

Even if the traveler fails to carry a knotted rope, he should always pack his own soap. There is plenty of it available in Europe, and no more need to import it from the U. S. A. than there is a need to bring toothpaste, or razor blades, or spot remover, or much of anything else. But it is not customary for European hotels, except some of those in the British Isles, to supply soap free. It hasn't occurred to them.

A handful of Kleenex or toilet paper in the purse or pistol

pocket at all times is another excellent idea, for reasons which will quickly become apparent to any traveler. So is a small workable flashlight, European varieties of which are about the size of a matchbox. So is a good Swiss or Swedish or German pocketknife with a built-in corkscrew and bottle opener, particularly if the traveler elects to nuzzle occasional highballs in his rooms, a practice which is both economical and enjoyable. Anybody who likes to read in bed and expects to sleep in small country inns from time to time will do well to buy one of the tiny but serviceable European clamp-on bed lamps. These have metal or plastic shades which do not crumple in packing, and the right kind of plug for European fixtures. A long extension cord helps, as does a screw-in plug for use where a light socket is the only source of power. The most common current in Europe is 110 volts, but when a traveler encounters 160 or 220, he can always buy a new light globe in the neighborhood if one already in his hotel room doesn't fit his lamp.

Demountable traveling irons, for anybody who uses them and doesn't object to the extra weight, can be purchased in Europe with three-way plugs which permit them to operate on 110, 160 or 220 volts. Electric razors are a mistake, because of those voltage difficulties, but the Swiss manufacture good wind-up jobs which shear the beard on the same principle as an electric, without electricity.

Visitors who do not choose to do their own ironing will find adequate valet and laundry services everywhere, as in the United States. And, again as in the United States, charges for rush jobs are very much higher than for normal work returnable in three or four days. A traveler making a series of one- or two-night stands should get along with his orlons and dacrons, rinsable in a washbowl, saving other laundry and cleaning for a longer stopover. When he does hand a bundle

of soiled linen to some hotel maid, he should be careful to avoid using words like, "As quickly as possible" when asked when he wants it back. It will come back more quickly than he expects, at three times the price he would have paid by implying that he would accept it whenever the laundry finished with it.

A traveler driving a motor vehicle should never honk his horn in European cities unless everybody else within earshot is doing it. In an increasing number of urban centers, and on the whole Côte d'Azur, horn honking is strictly forbidden under pain of a fine or, as in London, frowned upon as an evidence of bad manners. Anyone who makes a mistake in this respect and is picked up for it should be polite, regretful, unargumentative and dumb.

I have a friend named Toni who speaks fluent, flawless French and German, as well as English, which is her native tongue, and a fair smattering of other languages. She is, I regret to say, a lousy driver, frequently whistled down by the law. When this happens, the routine goes as follows:

Cop (in German): "You were exceeding the speed limit, *fraulein.* May I see your papers?"

Toni (nervously, in English): "I'm terribly sorry. I don't understand you."

Cop (in French this time): "You were going too fast, *mademoiselle.* Let me see your papers, please."

Toni (still in English, still nervous): "I just don't know what you want." (Desperately, raising her voice for the benefit of the gathering crowd) "Isn't there anyone here who speaks English?"

Stranger, male (They are always males, possibly because Toni looks like the Hollywood conception of a beautiful Hungarian spy.): "I do, miss. The policeman says you were speeding. He wants to see your driving permit."

Toni (who has been stalling simply to let the cop get a good noseful of her perfume and catch her lovely profile): "Why, I was barely creeping along. I left my driving permit at home. Tell the policeman I'm terribly sorry, and if he is going to arrest me may I please call the American embassy first?"

She lets her voice quaver at the last, looking little and helpless and frightened. This sinks the cop, who is very reluctant to hand out tickets to Americans anyway, his orders about tourists being what they are. Through the interpreter he explains that it is all right, there, there, try not to go quite so fast through town, and don't be afraid, nobody is going to eat you. The interpreter pours a little soft soap of his own, both of them patting Toni on the shoulder until she abandons the poor-little-frightened-me act for a timid but grateful smile which makes them both happy. She then steps on the gas and roars away, breaking more speed limits. It pays to be dumb with European cops unless you want information. One of their official functions is to help tourists.

Another defense against arresting officers is known as the Calculated Counterattack, or Moscow Breakaway. This was demonstrated effectively by the Russian ambassador to France, M. Pavlov, when his speeding car struck a Paris pedestrian. He immediately demanded of the Paris police that the city laws be changed to permit Soviet automobiles to travel at 75 miles an hour, and a further assurance that French pedestrians would be strictly forbidden to hurl themselves at his fenders before this criminal practice ruptured Franco-Soviet relations. At the same time, the French Communist press announced that it really had been an American car which struck the pedestrian, not a Russian car at all, and besides who could justify the lynchings in the South? This approach is recommended only for visiting diplomats, not ordinary travelers.

A visitor should look out not only for Russian drivers in

Europe but for rapidly approaching hee-haw, hee-haw sounds in the street. Sirens usually mean air raids, so fire engines, ambulances and paddy wagons are equipped with clanging bells or a noisemaker which sounds like a jackass with his tail caught in a hay-baler. When you hear one of these coming, pull over to the curb.

Buy, if you are buying at all, sportswear and novelty clothing in the country or area where these clothes will be utilized. Such acquisitions may not be the cheapest obtainable in the entire European market, but they will be the most practicable, and frequently the only ones a visitor will want to wear. In the Austrian Tyrol, for example, everybody goes in for Tyrolean hats, dirndls, leather pants and colorful ski clothing. A vacationer feels at home there if he dresses in the same way. Similarly, visitors will be in the swim in some parts of Spain *only* if they wear Spanish bathing suits with a chest covering for all parties, including males, otherwise off to the clink, whereas on the French Côte d'Azur nobody, male or female, wears more than a postage stamp or three on the beach during the summer, or more than shorts or slacks away from it. To go further, shorts and slacks are as inappropriate as bikinis or derby hats in other parts of Europe, and average travelers are not going to know what *will* be appropriate until they get there and see what the other guy and his girl are wearing that season. Of course if you are a Big Frog you are the Other Guy, and set the style even in a derby.

In connection with bikinis and other treats to the eye, it is generally true that most Europeans are less prudish than most Americans, although this does not mean that their moral standards are any lower. In Scandinavia, masculine steam-bath visitors are thumped, pummeled and massaged by perfectly respectable female muscle molls, while in France most lava-

tory attendants are elderly women, even on the masculine side of the partition. Many European chorus girls parade stripped to the waist as a normal feature of their routines, sometimes stripped to the toenails. Unless the visitor wants to create the impression that he is a hayshaker straight from the corn belt, he has to pass things like these off with a bored yawn.

A character named Irv, who does funny drawings for travel books, once introduced me to a model named Yvette, a red-headed girl who was posing for a class of art students at the Château de Fontainebleau. Elva, Kendal and I had called on Irv and Mrs. Irv while they and other artists were attempting to reproduce Yvette's attractive architecture in paint, water color, tempera and modeling clay. From a distance, the original they were copying looked merely artistic on the model's stand. Up close, shaking hands with it in all of its unrelieved bareness, it was something else. I had never before shaken hands publicly with a naked woman, and it was frightening. To me, I mean.

Yvette was the soul of poise. She said, "*Enchantée, m'sieur et dame*," and, "*Enchantée, mademoiselle*," and would we like to sketch her while we were waiting, and did we like Fontainebleau, and had *mademoiselle* fed the carp in the fish pond yet? While the chit-chat continued, I couldn't find anything to do with my eyes. The whole visible horizon was bare female anatomy. I was aware that my ears were sending up little curls of smoke, and a couple of half-smothered snickers from Irv and wife did not help to cool them. I suspect that an introduction to Yvette, in the flesh, was standard treatment for visiting firemen who interrupted the art class, with or without wives and children. I offer this report of what happened to me in the hope that some other visitor, someday, will be able to run a coolly appraising eye up and down Yvette, or whoever else is

standing in her place at the time, and say, "Not bad. Not bad at all. But don't catch cold on my account, babe. Slip into a G-string."

Swiss moral standards are rigid, particularly in regard to children. Babies under sixteen are still babies, even if they shave or wear a brassiere, and may not attend Swiss cinemas even with their parents. They ride for half-fare on Swiss trains, which is a break for anyone paying their fare. In spite of Swiss strictness about the underaged, or possibly because of it, Swiss nursery and boarding schools are excellent places to leave children for a summer. Most children, if I may venture an opinion about the little hellhounds, hate to travel for any length of time, detest cathedrals and museums, abhor sight-seeing, are nauseated by beautiful scenery, may neither enter night clubs nor be parked outside with the umbrellas, are pests in strange towns where they know nobody, cost enormous sums to drag around, and would much prefer to go to summer camp with their friends than accompany their parents on a foreign tour. All recommendations about traveling as light as possible extend with full force to adolescents and pre-adolescents. Anyone who has lugged one or more offspring to Europe and then changed his mind about it would do well to investigate Switzerland's nursery and boarding schools. English is a common language in them, which cures any immediate language difficulty, and the tots are liable to pick up a surprising amount of French or German. English schools are good, too, except that their boarders usually learn only English, and with a strange accent.

French boarding schools are excellent, among the finest on the continent, but communication in them is usually strictly in French. An English-speaking child left in one for only a short time does not become familiar enough with the language to cope with the strange environment, although given a few



months at it he or she will not only pick up much better French than his or her parents could learn in forty years, but other useful information as well. Kendal, who spent considerable time in a French school, carried on a running feud with a girl named Chantale who was alternately a bosom friend and pure poison. The feud was most bitter in the field of the dance. Chantale was a better ballet dancer than Kendal and invariably starred in school performances, or did at least until Kendal, who was her understudy on one occasion, took the elastic out of her rival's underpants and hid all possible replacements a few moments before Chantale had to put on the underpants and her *tutu* and toe-dance gracefully on stage in the role of a fairy. This simple act of sabotage accomplished exactly what it was intended to accomplish, and was, I believe, a distinctive French refinement of clumsier boarding-school tricks, such as a pail of water balanced on top of a door, or shoelaces tied together.

The increasingly popular European "rain-check" scheme offers summer vacationers assurance of fair weather or their money back. Monte Carlo, for instance, will pay its guests' hotel bills for any day that its rainfall is above the average of the preceding ten years, although visitors enticed to Monte Carlo by this offer should remember that there *is very* little to do there when it rains except gamble, an exercise at which Monte Carlo has been making money for years. Vienna's summer-weather insurers have already been mentioned, and Swiss insurance firms will write an inexpensive policy paying cash jackpots for rainfall during any stipulated holiday; so much of the face value for five days of bad weather, so much more for ten days, the whole thing on a complete rain-out. Since the insurance holder doesn't necessarily have to put in his vacation at the resort he has insured against precipitation, a good weather prophet can make holiday expenses simply by

buying a policy against foul weather coming up in the Azores, then sitting the storm out under a beach umbrella in the balmy Canaries.

Emergency medical expenses are no problem in England. It is not generally recognized that neither citizenship nor permanent residence is a prerequisite to free medical attention under the British socialized medicine setup. While the gravy is not as free-running as it used to be when hair pieces, glasses, false teeth and other aids to beauty were strictly on the house, a free-rider can do very nicely for himself by arranging to break a leg on English soil instead of elsewhere.

While considering broken legs and other injuries or diseases which might give rise to a temperature, it is worthwhile for travelers to memorize a simple method for converting centigrade, standard on continental thermometers, to Fahrenheit, standard for United States thermometers. Otherwise the average American will never know whether he is burning with fever or as cool as a barrel of kraut. The formula, which has been puzzling little old ladies from Philadelphia for at least a century and is always overcomplicated by mathematical sharks, is really fairly simple. If you double any centigrade figure above zero, then reduce the product by 10 per cent, then add 32, you have arrived at the equivalent in Fahrenheit, exactly. When some European croaker tells you that your fever is a flat 40 degrees, looking grave, you convert it to 80, reduce it to 72, add 32 to make 104, and know where you stand, or lie, as will be most probable with a temperature like that. It is somewhat harder to work the conversion backwards or apply it to minus values, but there is never any particular need for an American to do this while in Europe.

Another important thing for a traveler to memorize is the number, date and place of issuance of his passport. In this way he doesn't have to haul it out every ten minutes to look up the

information, which is frequently asked for, and when the passport is taken away from him by a ship's purser or plane steward and mixed with a bunch of others, he can ask for its return by number, which is all the information shown by the face of any United States passport.

In the British Isles, the old familiar, and clumsy, inch-foot-yard-rod-mile, pint-quart-peck-bushel, ounce-pound-hundredweight-ton standards of measurement still survive, along with other archaic hangovers like pounds, shillings and pence. On the continent, everything is measured according to the metric system, which not only has a decimal base but is logical. Meters, liters and grams are the units, and many guidebooks explain the fundamentals of the system, as does any collegiate dictionary. A brief study of the subject will pay dividends to the traveler in convenience and understanding. It is a measuring system in use all over the world, and therefore in effect a kind of universal language worth learning in the interests of international understanding.

For practical use in the field, it is worth a traveler's while to learn a few quick approximations. A liter may be regarded as a quart (although a French *quart* usually means a quarter of a liter, not a quarter of a gallon). Since a kilogram is 2.2 pounds, any kilo figure can be converted to pounds by doubling it and adding 10 per cent to the doubled amount, not a difficult mental operation. A kilometer is five-eighths of a mile, roughly 60 per cent, so kilometers can be converted approximately to miles by multiplying the kilometer figure by six and adjusting the decimal point in the product. Miles are converted to within a hair's breadth of kilometers by adding 60 per cent to the mile figure. It takes a printed table, as far as I am concerned, to convert tire pressures in pounds per square inch to kilos per square centimeter, the European standard, but there are approximately two and a half centimeters to the lineal inch, a



fact not hard to remember, and a meter is pretty close to three feet plus three inches and a third of an inch, which is even easier.

Air mail goes mainly by the gram in and from Europe at relatively high rates, not by the ounce as at home. In some countries five grams, enough to cover the weight of one sheet of paper and a light envelope, both with writing on them, will fly to the U. S. A. for the base charge, where an ounce would cost six times as much. A traveler in Europe who keeps up normal correspondence with the home folks is on the losing end of the game unless he can put the lug on the home folks for postage money. In no circumstances, however, should they be permitted to remit in stamps instead of in cash, as otherwise sensible people sometimes have a tendency to do. I have received letters in places like Tierra del Fuego and Turkey and Tehuantepec containing self-addressed reply envelopes stamped with good old U. S. air-mail issues, as worthless in those places as so many bits of confetti, and I know of at least one traveler who arrived in Europe loaded with a supply of economical prestamped aerograms, one-piece letter-and-envelope combinations printed, and stamped, in the United States. These same aerograms can be bought in a few European countries with the right kind of stamps on them. But regular air-mail stationery available in Europe is generally designed to meet the five-gram limitation.

A traveler should never throw away, abandon, lose or misplace any form, declaration, registration, ticket, *carnet*, permit, pass or other printed paper given, sold to or forced upon him in Europe until he is safely home again and can make a bonfire of his collection. Travel in Europe is still complicated by pointless red tape, although happily much less so than it used to be, and the visitor will be required from time to time to fill out and carry with him documents containing information

about himself, his children, his parents, his grandparents, his height, weight, color of eyes, religion, state of health, political convictions, baggage, bankroll and identifying scars. More often than not nobody will ever look at these papers again, or evidence any interest in them at all. But on one occasion out of ten the visitor will be asked to produce the documents for inspection by the authorities, and he will have a much easier time of it if they are ready to hand than if he says airily, "Oh, I chucked that garbage in the ash can." It is widely recognized in Europe that anything illegal, a smuggling operation for example, is fairly easy to arrange, while legitimate activities are extremely difficult to carry on. There is no paperwork in connection with smuggling.

The government of the Republic of France once owed me 80 francs, then worth about 20 cents, because of an overpayment I had made on a registration fee. I was notified by mail to present myself, with the notification and proper means of identification, at the nearest post office to claim the cash. Because the nearest post office was too far away by at least 10 cents' worth, I tore up the notice and forgot about it.

For eighteen months afterward, further notices trailed me all over Europe. I would get them in places like Larissa and Stratford-on-Avon and Naples and Düsseldorf and Jönköping: Please claim your 80 francs at the nearest French post office. The liability was on the books, and because no official written record of any kind has been destroyed in France since Napoleon Bonaparte cleaned out the accumulation which had built up before his time, the liability would remain on the books until either I or another Napoleon did something about it. The notifications began to take on a pleading note: *Please* collect your 80 francs.

I finally did, in Paris. I went to a post office with the fourteenth notice and presented it at the proper window. The

clerk said, "Ah, yes. Your passport, please. For identification."

"I don't have it with me. I brought my *permis de séjour*."

He took the *permis* and looked at it.

"You are then a resident of France, monsieur?" he asked.

"I have a *permis, yes*." It seemed like the most tactful answer. I had residence papers for seven countries.

"Where do you live, if one may ask?"

I didn't see what business it was of his, but French post-office clerks are too polite, even when nosy, for a quick brush-off. I said, "Temporarily, at the Hotel Sts. Pères, Rue Sts. Pères, 6ième *arrondissement*, room 16. Formerly at the Villa Noël Fleuri, Golfe Juan, department of Alpes Maritimes, on the north side of Route Nationale No. 7, one and one-half kilometers west of the Golfe Juan post office and approximately eight kilometers south of Pablo Picasso. I am about to leave for Zurich, in Switzerland. While there, I will most probably stay, with my wife and daughter, at—"

"Switzerland, *alors*. That is very good for you, monsieur. Please sign here."

I signed for my 80 francs, anxious to escape before he asked me about my love life. While I was doing this, he went away and came back with a clipping from a newspaper which he let me read, free, for no other reason except that he hadn't been idly curious at all but wanted to do me a favor.

I won't go too deeply into the mechanics of the gimmick. It doesn't pay dividends the way it used to. But aliens resident in France, like French citizens, can buy so many French francs worth of hard Swiss money twice a year at official exchange rates, to spend in Switzerland, although in Switzerland the free French franc is usually several points below official exchange. The net effect is that the French government sells, for French francs, Swiss money which can be taken across the

Swiss border to buy more French francs than it cost, returning a cash profit which, when brought back to France and re-invested in Swiss francs to be taken back to Switzerland for further franc purchases, produces still another profit and would balloon that way to infinity except that the French government will only cooperate to the extent of a limited investment and a limited turnover. But it is all strictly according to Hoyle as far as it goes, and there is hardly any point in passing up a bonanza when it is handed to you on a silver platter if you happen to be going to Switzerland anyway. The only thing which hurt me was that, in two years of bouncing back and forth fairly regularly between France and Switzerland, among other countries, I had never known that it was possible to work this small vein of ore. I felt that I was losing my grip, and had better get on along home before some European bunco-steerer took advantage of my ignorance and sold me a gold brick.

So it goes. The rules change from time to time, vary from country to country, and are complicated everywhere. But they can be made to work to the benefit of the traveler if he uses his noodle. For a visitor who must nurse nickels and take advantage of every opportunity to turn honest pennies, not to mention a couple of dubious ones, it is vitally important that he obtain the latest available information about rules, regulations and controls from those sources which offer it freely: travel agents, national tourist bureaus, up-to-date guide books and, last but far from least, the money-changers.

A dollar isn't what it used to be in Europe. But it is still worth a lot more Over There than it is on its home grounds, and European price levels have not only stopped rising but even turned downward, in some cases. A report issued by the Statistical Commission of the United Nations shows that the

cost of living, for dollar earners, is already 30 percent less in Copenhagen and The Hague than in New York City, twenty to twenty-five percent below New York in Vienna, London and Athens, ten to fifteen percent below in Brussels and Geneva, and these are all urban centers where prices are high compared to other parts of their countries. The cost of transportation to, from and around Europe has dropped sharply in the past few years, and continues to go down under the increasing advances and efficiencies of air transport. Transatlantic jets will be in operation soon on the already quick and economical ocean crossings, and planes of the transarctic aerial shortcut from the west coast of North America now quote "tourist" fares as well as "family plans" for budget-minded westerners. With statistics from the United States Civil Aeronautics Board to show that international travel on American planes is two and a half times safer than travel by train, 46 times more favorable than the payload's chances in a taxi, things are fast getting to a point where people can't afford *not* to fly over to Europe for a vacation.

I was in Istanbul on an occasion when the International Air Transport Association announced one of the basic adjustments that have been pushing transatlantic air fares steadily downward during the last decade. A Turkish friend and I were walking across the Galata bridge on our way to lunch at the Spice Market while I analyzed for him—rather brilliantly, I thought—what the promising trend in over-the-ocean air transport prices might bring to the travel industry. My friend was in the shipping business, and did not respond to my own enthusiasm when I pointed out that more people had taken to crossing the world's oceans by air than by ship. Why was that? I asked rhetorically. Because today's traveler was the poor man, obliged to watch costs, and intercontinental travel by air

offered economies, real and potential, that no other means of transport could hope to match. My Turkish friend took me silently by the arm and led me to the railing of the bridge to point out a grimy little ferryboat plugging toward the tip of Europe, near where we stood, from the westernmost extremity of Asia a thousand yards away across the Bosporus.

"Do you know what it costs to go from that continent to this?" he asked, also rhetorically. "Five cents."

It will probably be some years before the cost of even the most economical trip across the Atlantic approaches the price of a ferryboat ride on the Bosporus, but meanwhile Europe has great rewards to offer Americans who are not obliged to wait for that happy day; a highly developed culture, sports, entertainments, scenery, mountains, beaches, music, dancing, gaiety, fine food, bargain merchandise and a warm welcome. Its ways of life are not American ways, but they are good ones, and enjoyable. They can be expensive, certainly, for a traveler with expensive tastes. But they needn't be. It costs nothing to visit a fourteenth-century cathedral, or the Istanbul bazaars, or the Acropolis in Athens, or a Spanish market place during a *fiesta*, or to lie on a warm Mediterranean beach, or to watch the Jungfrau emerge from the clouds on an autumn afternoon, or to bicycle through the Cotswold hills on a bright spring morning, or to take pictures of the pigeons in the Piazza San Marco in Venice, or to listen to the carillon of the Niewe Kerk in Delft. Europeans are friendly and eager for tourist business, exchange rates are favorable to the dollar, costs are generally low by American standards, red tape has been reduced to a minimum, travel from country to country is quick and easy, and you can get there from any point in the United States in a day or two. A little money, a little trouble to learn something about the people and what they expect of



visitors, a little effort with the language is all it takes. A little chiseling of expenses by application of the principles outlined in this handbook will help cut costs as well, making a pleasant trip even more pleasant for people who are slow to unleash a dime unless they get 12 cents for it. *Bon voyage.*

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THE AUTHOR of *The Poor Man's Guide to Europe* r
himself as a professional traveler. "As there are professional
and professional tennis players as well as amateurs, so th
professional getters-around as well as people who just go.
the first class. Some writers travel to gather material to writ
I find the end and aim of life is to write about things so as t
funds to travel."

David Dodge has published five travel books and nine
and adventure stories. He says that the nice thing about tr
avocation is that it gives him not only material for travel
interesting backgrounds for murder mysteries as well, al
pay for further travel so he can gather additional mat
corporate in still more travel books as well as in annual
of this, his major effort.

He spent a good part of last year in Europe gather
for this year's revision. Because he devoted more time t
to writing, he returned, he says, "poorer and better in
ever." This obviously increases his qualifications as an
the subject he has chosen to deal with in *The Poor M*
*Europe*.

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